

Japan urges Iran to accept accord

TEHRAN (AP) — Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Hiroshi Fukuda "strongly urged" Iran Sunday to drop its opposition to the Israeli-Palestinian accord on autonomy for the occupied territories, Japanese diplomats said. Mr. Fukuda made the appeal during talks here with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and Deputy Foreign Minister Aliakbar Boroujerdi, shortly after his arrival for a brief visit, they said. Tehran's position "weakens trust in Iran and threatens to isolate the Islamic republic," a Japanese diplomat quoted the envoy as telling the Iranian leaders. Mr. Fukuda "strongly urged Iran to support the historic accord or, at the very least, to stop trying to undermine it," the diplomat said, adding that despite the firm message the talks were cordial. But Mr. Velayati reaffirmed Iran's rejection of the "shameful" and "disastrous" accord, the diplomat said. Japanese Foreign Ministry officials said Friday that Mr. Fukuda would express Tokyo's disappointment at Tehran's opposition to the agreement and that he would call on his counterparts here to support peace moves in the region. An Iranian newspaper warned Sunday that "any such request was doomed to fail, given the Iranian leadership's tough stand on the issue."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرابطة

Algerian Islamists form unified command

PARIS (AP) — Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) has announced the creation of an executive body in exile to unify "all the forces" of the banned movement, according to a statement received this weekend. The move implies a single command for the numerous armed groups of extremists trying to topple the country's military-backed government. "Neither the crimes perpetrated by the military junta nor the executions of the innocent will stop us in our struggle," said the communiqué. The executive body is headed by FIS spokesman Rabah Kebir, who lives in exile in Germany, the communiqué said. The vice-president is Kamareddine Kherbane, a former army officer said to be linked to "Afghan" guerrilla fighters. Algerians who trained for or fought in Afghanistan's civil war. The statement said that "all the forces and potential" of the salvation front have been unified in this body, whose seat was not named, "assuring... better efficacy in our struggle." It called on the people to unify against the Algerian leadership.

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Prince Hassan visits army units

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday toured several armed forces units and a Royal Air Force base, an armed forces formation in the northern region, and one of the formations of the Third Armoured Division carrying out a military exercise. Prince Hassan voiced appreciation for all participants in the exercises. The Crown Prince was accompanied by the chiefs of staff for land and air forces.

Clinton may travel to Middle East

WASHINGTON (APF) — White House Chief of Staff Thomas McLarty said Saturday that President Bill Clinton could travel soon to the Middle East, notably in Syria to meet with President Hafez Al Assad. Asked in an interview on CNN television whether Mr. Clinton would possibly travel soon to Middle East, perhaps to see Mr. Assad, Mr. McLarty would not rule it out. "I think it's possible, but I certainly would not make that a forecast or prediction. I think the president obviously went quickly to work talking to leaders in that region, but we'll have to see about whether a trip will be warranted by President Clinton, Secretary (of State Warren) Christopher and others," Mr. McLarty said.

King Fahd appoints regional assemblies

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's King Fahd named members of regional assemblies in 13 provinces Sunday in a further step to give Saudis a greater say in the running of their country's affairs. A royal decree appointing the assemblies and published by the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) followed last month's appointment of a 60-man national Shura (consultative) council, the kingdom's first representative body for almost 60 years. The decree named up to 20 men to each regional assembly. A first reading of the names showed most belong to the prominent tribal and trading families and clans and many carried the academic title of doctor, indicating a high proportion of middle-class professionals.

Britain urges peaceful end to Iran-UAE row

NICOSIA (R) — A senior British diplomat holding talks in Tehran has urged Iran and the United Arab Emirates to settle their territorial dispute peacefully. The official Iranian news agency IRNA said Britain's Assistant Under-Secretary for the Middle East Michael Burton made the call at talks, Saturday in Tehran with Hamid Assefi, foreign ministry director general for European affairs. "He (Burton) said that it is the position of the British government that the dispute between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates over three Persian Gulf islands should be solved mutually through peaceful means," IRNA said.

Jailed Briton's wife sees husband in Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — The wife of a Briton jailed in Iraq for illegally entering the country has visited her husband three times since arriving in Baghdad four days ago, diplomats said Sunday. "She is now in Abu Ghraib prison. The Iraqis allow her to stay as long as she needs," a diplomat said. Julie Rida, arrived in Baghdad Thursday to see her husband Paul who is serving a seven-year sentence for illegally entering Iraq from Kuwait.

Arafat, wife expecting child

TUNIS (AP) — Yasser Arafat and his wife, Subla, are expecting a child, a leading Tunisian newspaper said Sunday. Al Ra'i Al Amn did not give any date for what it termed the "happy event." If correct, the child will be their first. Mrs. Arafat would not be reached for comment. Mr. Arafat was in Cairo on Sunday addressing a meeting of Arab League foreign ministers.

Total Israeli withdrawal will be achieved, Arafat promises Arab League

Combined agency dispatches

CAIRO — Palestine Leader Yasser Arafat pledged at an Arab League meeting here Sunday to secure a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and described the autonomy deal with Israel as "just a start."

"Now that we are on the threshold of a new era as part of the new world order we must focus our attention on the interests of our nation and on its security," Mr. Arafat said in a speech to Arab League foreign ministers. Among the remaining goals are "the liberation of all occupied Palestinian land, the restoration of the right of return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital," he said.

"The agreement we have reached (with Israel) represents just a start, nothing more," said Mr. Arafat, who sealed the historic peace deal with a handshake with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the White House lawn.

Diplomats said the Arab League foreign ministers were expected to draft a statement of general support for the autonomy accord, while taking into account the opposition or reservations of certain member states.

Most of the Arab League's 21 members have approved the accord, but dissent has come from Iraq, Libya and Lebanon, with Syria, a key player, remaining non-committal.

A lifting of the Arab economic boycott of Israel, strongly urged by the United States, is not on the agenda for the Arab League meeting.

The foreign ministers are due to discuss possible problems in the application of the accord. "It is not a complete solution, not a complete solution, but only part of a transitional phase... which accomplishes a small part of our rights," Mr. Arafat told 19 Arab foreign ministers, gathered for a regular six-monthly meeting.

Israel lifts Gaza siege; soldier in hit-and-run

Combined agency dispatches

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — The Israeli military Sunday eased restrictions on travel by the 775,000 Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, which was sealed off Wednesday to prevent attacks during Jewish new year celebrations.

A hitchhiking Israeli soldier was injured here meanwhile in a hit-and-run incident involving a car registered in the Israeli-occupied territories, police said.

The soldier suffered leg and neck injuries when the car, which had blue licence plates identifying it as belonging to a Palestinian from the occupied territories, hit him as he was standing near a bus station, police said.

Military sources said the closure of the Gaza Strip had been lifted at dawn Sunday, although Gazans who work in Israel would continue to undergo strict security checks at the frontier.

The Israeli army and police traditionally impose strict security measures during Jewish holidays, fearing an upsurge in resistance attacks.

Israel's signing of an autonomy agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has made little or no difference to the threat, according to police, and hardline Islamic groups opposed to the peace deal have pledged to continue their attacks.

The nearly two million Palestinians living in the occupied territories already require a special permit to enter occupied Jerusalem and Israel in a ban launched at the end of March.

However, 30,000 permits have been issued for workers to enter the Jewish state.

Local leaders of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction of the PLO have told Palestinians to halt demonstrations in favour of the peace accord with Israel.



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, accompanied by Arab League Secretary-General Essam Abdul Meguid and aides, arrives at the opening Sunday of a meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo (AFP photo)

It was the first time Mr. Arafat had addressed a major Arab gathering since the PLO signed the deal with Israel last week.

"The agreement we arrived at is only the basis for an interim solution and the forerunner to a final settlement, which must be based on complete withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian lands, especially Holy Jerusalem," he added.

There was no momentous welcome for the man who for decades symbolised the Arabs' armed struggle against Israel and has now become the Jewish state's new peace partner.

Delegates clapped politely when Mr. Arafat entered the chamber, when he started his speech and when he left. They listened to him in silence.

For an hour, Mr. Arafat carefully argued that the self-rule deal the PLO signed was constitutional, following precedents set by resolutions in the Arab League, United Nations and the Palestine

(Continued on page 5)

Hamas to boycott polls for self-rule

AMMAN (Agencies) — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) denied Sunday it wanted to participate in elections to a self-rule council in the Israeli-occupied territories and said it would ask Palestinians to boycott the vote.

"The position of Hamas is clear towards rejecting self-rule and any elections related to it as we consider these elections to be a part of the cursed agreement and a result of the recognition of the enemy," Mohammad Nazzari, the Hamas representative in Jordan, told Reuters.

Senior PLO official Nabil Shaath was quoted Saturday as saying Hamas wanted to participate in the elections.

Dr. Shaath said the rival Palestinian movement could come to power through the ballot box if people in the occupied territories did not see tangible benefits quickly from the PLO-Israel deal.

Under the terms of the PLO-Israel accord signed last week, elections to a local Palestinian governing council are set to take place within nine months.

Hamas ideologically opposes peace with Israel and has condemned the PLO agreement with Israel as treason.

"This is our final stance and we will ask the Palestinian people to boycott these elections," Mr. Nazzari added.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said in an interview that PLO and Hamas officials are likely to meet soon in Yemen.

"Our Executive Committee appealed for reconciliation," Mr. Arafat told the Observer newspaper.

Hamas replied they are ready to attend a meeting very soon in Yemen.

Jordan preparing compensation demand

By Jane Arraf
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan is preparing a multi-billion dollar demand for compensation from Israel and the rest of the world for taking in waves of Palestinian refugees over the years, government officials said.

Lawyers and economists are laying the groundwork for a peace dividend under an equation which maintains that the economic strain of refugees of the small aid-dependent Kingdom outweighs the benefits of Palestinian money and labour.

Estimates vary widely but while Jordanian officials publicly say Palestinians form as little as 40 per cent of the population of four million, independent assessments give a much higher figure.

"Of course we have to ask for this," Prime Minister

Abdul Salam Al Majali said last week in confirming that Jordan was seeking state compensation from Israel. "As a state we have suffered... we have to be compensated for it."

"Officials say a flood of international aid and development money to the Israeli-occupied territories following the PLO-Israel accord signed last week would widen Jordan's economic disparity with the West Bank and destabilise the Kingdom."

Awn Al Khasawneh, the palace's top legal adviser, said he could not put a figure on how much compensation the Kingdom might seek.

But others cited as a starting point government figures showing that Jordan had lost at least \$1 billion a year since 350,000 of its citizens, mainly Palestinians, were kicked out of Kuwait after the 1991 Gulf

war and returned to the Kingdom.

"I don't think they expect to get that but they are using this issue as part of a wider push for a share of regional aid," said one diplomat.

King Hussein has played down the issue of compensation for absorbing Palestinians whom he considers to be part of the Jordanian family.

But officials say despite the integration of refugees from the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars and their undisputed role in the economy, the Kingdom has made sacrifices by giving them citizenship and a home — and is clearly owed a debt.

The issue has raised hackles among many Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship who believe the Kingdom is trying to cash in on them.

There could also be friction with the PLO, the key figure

in complex negotiations with Israel over the right of return and compensation of the Palestinian diaspora.

"There is no doubt that the refugees have contributed to the economy but it is easily demonstrable that they have been a burden on a country of small resources," Mr. Khasawneh said in an interview.

He said there were international precedents for state compensation going back to World War II.

Apart from its claim from Israel, the Kingdom is seeking aid from foreign donors who will help shape regional development.

Officials said Israel has floated in bilateral negotiations the idea it could help improve the lives of Palestinians who stay in their host countries, raising Jordanian hopes they could receive some Israeli funds.

U.S. asks Jordan to delete anti-Israeli items from school books

AMMAN (AP) — The United States has asked Jordan to delete anti-Israeli references in school textbooks as a confidence-building measure with the Jewish state, an official said Sunday.

The request by the U.S. State Department was contained in a letter received by the government Thursday, the Jordanian official said, speaking on condition he was not identified further.

The letter arrived two days after Jordan and Israel signed an agenda outlining the principles for a peace agreement which envisages normalised relations after 45 years of conflict.

"The letter asks Jordan to embark on confidence-building measures after it has formalised an agenda for negotiations with Israel," the official told the Associated Press.

He quoted the one-page letter as saying the first measure could be "the deletion of anti-Israeli references in the curriculum at Jordanian schools, colleges and universities."

Israel is described by such terms as "the Jewish enemy" and "usurper of Arab lands" in Jordanian texts for history, geography, sociology and other courses.

An acting spokesman at the U.S. embassy said he could neither confirm nor deny the request. "I have seen nothing about that," Jonathan Rice said.

The reported request falls in line with Washington's declared objective of encouraging normalisation between Israel and Arab states in the wake of the landmark agreement signed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel on Sept. 13.

The Israel-PLO accord cleared the way for the Jewish state and Jordan, Syria and Lebanon to proceed with negotiations in the U.S.-backed Middle East peace process which started two years ago.

On Tuesday, Jordan and Israel finalised an agenda for negotiations on major issues of contention, including occupied Jordanian territory, sharing water resources, security, and the status of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees stranded for decades in Jordan.

Last week Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali told reporters Jordan was ready to normalise relations with Israel in phases, depending on progress in the negotiations.

He said that included opening telephone links and permitting people to enter Jordan with Israeli stamps in their passports.

Mubarak, Rabin discuss peace accord, 'Israel-Arab relations'

Combined agency dispatches

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak held talks here Sunday with Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and praised Israel for taking a "strong step towards peace" by accepting Palestinian self-rule.

Speaking at a joint press conference following their two-hour meeting, Mr. Mubarak praised Israel for reaching agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on Palestine autonomy.

The Egyptian leader welcomed the agreement on Palestinian self-government in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank of Jericho as a "courageous step towards the Palestinians and the strong step towards peace."

Mr. Rabin, who was meeting Mr. Mubarak for the third time since taking power in Israel in July 1992, said he believed that the PLO-Israel pact signed in Washington last week would lead to other agreements.

"We are trying to conclude something with the Syrians," Mr. Rabin told reporters.

The Israeli and Egyptian leaders first met privately in the presidential palace overlooking the Mediterranean Sea before being joined by advisers, the officials said.

The Israeli prime minister was scheduled to return to Israel later

Sunday aboard an Israeli air force plane.

It was Mr. Rabin's first meeting with Mr. Mubarak since the signing of the autonomy agreement at the White House in Washington on Sept. 13.

Israeli officials said prior to the talks that Egypt could play a major role in promoting the establishment of ties between Israel and other Arab States.

Mr. Rabin visited Morocco last week for talks with King Hassan II but diplomatic relations were not immediately forthcoming.

Egypt is the only Arab state to have made peace with Israel and it has played a mediating role between the Jewish state and the Palestinians since the start of the Middle East peace talks in Madrid in October 1991.

Israel's U.N. ambassador Gad Yaacobi said last week that "five to eight Muslim countries" could open diplomatic relations with Israel this year.

The Israeli premier's visit coincided with a meeting of Arab League foreign ministers in Cairo which PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has earlier addressed, seeking their support for the PLO-Israel accord.

"We are expecting Egypt to influence other Arab countries to contribute to the peace process," Israeli Health Minister Haim Ramon told reporters in occupied Jerusalem Sunday. "This is the

main goal of the Rabin visit to Egypt."

Israeli-Syrian negotiations have deadlocked over Syria's demand for a complete, one-step Israeli withdrawal in the Golan Heights seized in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Israel wants assurances that Syria would in return agree to full-fledged diplomatic ties with embassies and free trade and travel.

The Clinton administration has reportedly been trying to use the momentum of the Israel-PLO accord to achieve progress also in talks between Israel and Syria.

Mr. Clinton telephoned Syrian President Hafez Al Assad last week, asking him to rein-in groups opposed to the Israeli-PLO accord so as to shore up Israeli confidence in Syria.

President Assad is also expected to visit Egypt in the next few days, according to press reports in Cairo.

Israeli officials could not confirm reports that Mr. Rabin was carrying a message to Mr. Assad to be delivered by Mr. Mubarak.

Israeli newspapers said Israel also hoped Egypt could mediate diplomatic openings with other Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia, and an end to an Arab economic boycott of Israel.

Mr. Shahal said Mr. Rabin and Mr. Mubarak were expected to discuss the possibility of Egypt training Palestinian police.

Opponents of Israel-PLO deal escalate their war of rhetorics

By Jamal Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — Opponents of the ground-breaking Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel peace accord on Sunday stepped up their criticism of the agreement.

In Jordan, some 110 prominent Palestinians, including members of the PLO's parliament-in-exile, signed a petition calling for non-violent resistance to the accord.

In the Syrian capital Damascus, a visiting Iranian diplomat met with hardline Palestinian leader George Habash to discuss strategy against the pact.

In Lebanon, the leader of the Shiite Muslim fundamentalist Hizbollah pledged to continue its campaign against Israeli forces who occupy a border strip in South Lebanon.

In Iran, the speaker of the Majlis (parliament) condemned the agreement as "the most disgraceful document in history."

But while the rhetoric escalated, there were no concrete steps by any of the opponents to try to overturn the pact signed at the White House on Sept. 13.

The opponents, many caught by surprise at the deal, have widely differing ideologies and could have trouble putting together a unified opposition, front to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

The PLO-Israel accord calls for limited self-government in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho. Limited autonomy is to be expanded to other areas of the West Bank before negotiations on a final settlement.

Opponents argue that the pact does not guarantee the Palestinians' goal of an independent homeland and fails to deal with such difficult issues as refugees and the future of Jerusalem.

The statement issued in Jordan was signed by 110 prominent Palestinians, including members of the Palestine National Council.

It called on Palestinians "to resist and foil this submissive accord through peaceful means."

It added: "We urge them to hold fast to the Palestinian national struggle and historical rights, foremost of which are the right to return to Palestine, the right to self-determination and the right to establish an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital."

The petition was signed by leaders of 10 Palestinian hardline factions, several Islamic fundamentalist groups and prominent lawyers, businessmen and political activists living in Jordan.

In Damascus, Hussein Sheikhholeslam, Iran's visiting deputy foreign minister, met with Dr. Habash to consider ways to torpedo the accord.

Mr. Sheikhholeslam told reporters after his two-hour meeting with the leader of the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine that the PLO-Israel agreement "is doomed to failure."

He called for unification of guerrilla units to support the nearly six-year Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza.

The leader of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah said Sunday his group would continue its guerrilla warfare against Israel in South Lebanon.

Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah made the statement at a rally honouring eight Hizbollah activists killed in a clash with the Lebanese army a week ago.

"If the massacre was intended as a message to the United States that the (Lebanese) government is capable of snuffing out resistance against the Israeli enemy, then it will discover how foolish this is," Sheikh Nasrallah told the crowd.

Two protest rallies were reported in Iran on Sunday, as well as further angry statements by Iranian leaders.

In the capital Tehran, Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri told the opening of the fall session that the PLO-Israel pact was "the most disgraceful document in history."

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Palestinians want return of relics

By Geraldine Chatelard
Agence France Presse

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

The dispute to be settled by Palestinians and Israelis is not limited to the land but also to the treasures lying beneath it. The Palestinians will seek authority over the archaeological sites of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip once limited self-rule begins, and they want relics uncovered by Israeli archaeologists in those regions to be handed back.

"The treasures found under our land are part of our national heritage. They must be returned to us," said Mahmoud Hawari, a 39-year-old Palestinian archaeologist who teaches at Bir Zeit University, the most prestigious higher education institution in the occupied territories.

Beyond the squabble over property, the conflict is primarily political. Each party wants history to be its witness, to justify its right to live on that land.

"All Israeli archaeological activity in our areas aims at unearthing a Jewish presence without bothering about sites of the Islamic era," he said. "Until recently, one often saw bulldozers smashing through the upper layers to quickly reach vestiges of Jewish life, thereby destroying traces of Arab civilisation," he added.

For archaeologist Nazmi Al Jubi, a member of the Palestinian technical committee charged with antiquities, "archaeology's ideological stake makes the handover of power to us a very thorny issue."

In fact, the matter does not figure in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Israeli autonomy deal signed Monday in Washington. The document refers to a transfer

of authority to Palestinian autonomy officials, as of Oct. 13, in five areas: Education and culture, health, social affairs, direct taxation and tourism.

To skirt the difficulty and show Israelis that archaeology is a priority for Palestinians, Mr. Jubi suggests it to be discussed along with tourism, since no "tourism" department exists within the military administration.

"We would like to discuss it with our Israeli colleagues but they refuse to provide us with detailed information on the condition of findings in the occupied territories. They hide behind the fact that archaeology is not part of the accord," charged Mr. Jubi who also teaches at Bir Zeit.

The chief Israeli protagonist is Yitzhak Magen, who heads the military administration's archaeological department and who refuse to respond to charges against him.

"An eventual return of relics to Palestinians is premature. In fact, there are few qualified Palestinian archaeologists making negotiations difficult," he said.

But the environment ministry, headed by Yossi Sarid, a key left-wing figure, seems to have taken the initiative. It tapped professor Aroon Kaminski, an archaeology professor at Tel Aviv University, to mediate with the Palestinians.

"Contacts were made with Palestinian archaeologists, in a bid to hand over administration of the West Bank's five 'national parks' — archaeological sites where relics were found before Israel's occupation of the region in 1967."

Sites uncovered since 1967 fall under the "jurisdiction" of the military administration, which does not publicly account for its findings.



A Palestinian sews his fishing net next to a Palestinian flag in the port of Gaza in the occupied Gaza Strip. Since Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) signed an autonomy agreement on Sept. 13, Gazan boats fly the Palestinian flag despite their links to Israel's port authorities (AFP photo)

'Heart failure' in detention — 'it happens in Egypt'

CAIRO (AP) — Ahmad Farouq Ahmad Ali was 28 and a construction worker. Police say he told interrogators he also was a Islamic terrorist, whose bombs killed 13 people.

A day later, Farouq died, in prison, of what police called "heart failure."

Amnesty International, the U.S. State Department and other agencies have accused President Hosni Mubarak's government of systematic, widespread torture in prisons and maltreatment of detainees.

"It happens. It happens in Egypt," Boumedouha, a researcher with the Egypt section of Amnesty International in London, said Friday. "We had another case last year. The guy died following torture. They said he died while he was just about to be released."

The Egyptian government's version of that victim — his name was Mahmoud Gahmi Saadawi and he also was a suspected Islamic extremist — was that Saadawi "suffered general fatigue," was hospitalised and died of "a sudden failure in the blood and respiratory system."

The government told Amnesty International that Saadawi was stricken as he was being transferred from Tora prison after less than two months in custody "to finalise his release procedures."

Amnesty said he actually was held a month longer, left Tora two days earlier and died after six days' torture at the headquarters of the state security intelligence

service. Amnesty International also accused the Egyptian government of torturing two suspected Islamic fundamentalists to death last December within weeks of their arrest in a roundup of hundreds in Imbaba, a slum-ridden extremist hotbed in Cairo. The government never answered that charge.

Egypt is among Washington's best Middle East friends and considers itself a showcase for democracy in the region.

And unlike many governments, Egypt's sometimes answers complaints by Amnesty International and other foreign human rights advocacy agencies. Like many others, however, Mr. Mubarak's government always denies that state policy allows torture but admits that, as an aberration, occasional torture occurs.

The government neither recognises nor considers legal the Egyptian Human Rights Organisation or the Cairo-based Arab Organisation for Human Rights. It has never answered one of their complaints.

Ahmad Farouq Ahmad Ali's story was told, from the police perspective, in the government-owned Al-Ahram, Cairo's leading newspaper, and its sister publication, the English-language Al-Ahram Weekly. That means the government wanted it told.

The newspapers reported that a neighbour's tipoff led police to Ali. They told of his arrest in a working-class neighbourhood and his questioning, during which

"the suspect collapsed" and confessed to membership in the movement that assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981 and to knowledge of three bombings.

Nobody was injured in one of them. Another killed eight Egyptians waiting at a bus stop, but Ali Ahram weekly quoted Ali as saying "those victims will go to heaven" because their deaths helped in God's fight against a heretical government. The third bombing was an Aug. 18 attempt on the life of Interior Minister Hassan Al-Ali. The minister survived, but five people didn't.

"The suspect, who is said to have confessed to taking part in all three operations, died while in detention, the reason of death being given as heart failure," the English-language Al-Ahram Weekly said.

It also said Ali died the day after his confession. Shortly after his appointment as Egypt's top policeman last spring, Gen. Ali listed several human rights violations by previous ministers and said he would stop them.

Asked about that, the secretary-general of the Egyptian Human Rights Organisation, Bahareddin Hassan, expressed doubt.

"Each time we have a new interior minister, we hope for the best," Mr. Hassan said. "But it has become apparent that it's not the interior minister's policy but the government's policy that prevails."

North told Waite U.S. 'used' him — report

LONDON (AP) — Oliver North says the United States did "use" Terry Waite when the Church of England envoy was negotiating for release of hostages in Lebanon, the Sunday Times reported.

The newspaper, reporting on a BBC television documentary to be broadcast this week, also said Mr. Waite absolved Colonel North of any responsibility for his capture and the nearly five years he spent as a hostage of extremists in Lebanon.

The Sunday Times said the BBC filmed a meeting the two men in London — the first since Mr. Waite was released Nov. 18, 1991. It gave no date for the meeting, saying only that it took place this year.

Col. North, a former National Security Council aide, was involved in the U.S. Iran-contra arms-for-hostages affair, and the newspaper said Mr. Waite's relationship with Col. North "led many to believe he had been used as a cover for the trading of arms for hostages."

It said, "North had no compunction in admitting this to Mr. Waite."

It did not provide quotes that directly supported this comment, but it quoted Col. North as saying, "our government did use you ... it uses people every day. You are the only person who was ever able to go in and meet face to face with those people (the kidnappers). That was very important. You confirmed for us what had happened to various people."

Mr. Waite was seized in Beirut in January 1987 while on a mission to secure freedom for U.S. hostages. At the same time, Col. North was arranging secret shipments of arms to Iran in exchange for the release of Americans held by pro-Iranians in Lebanon.

Although Mr. Waite always declared he worked independently of any government and was not involved in the arms-for-hostages deal, some commentators felt that revelations about the deal compromised Mr. Waite in the eyes of the extremists.

Mr. Waite was quoted Sunday as saying: "There's one thing I would like to say ... People have said Oliver North is the person responsible for my captivity. I'd like to say I don't believe that to be the case. It was my decision to go back. I'd like you to know that."

Col. North replied, "I'm very grateful to hear you say those words," the newspaper said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Suha Arafat shares 'a great love story'

PARIS (AP) — Suha Arafat, wife of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman, said in an interview with a magazine published Monday that she intends to work for emancipation of Palestinian women as first lady of a future Palestinian state. "I warned my husband, I told him, 'if you agree, we will demonstrate under your window and I'll be at the head of the crowd,'" she was quoted as saying. Mrs. Arafat, a she admires Hillary Clinton and Danielle Mitterrand, the ladies of the United States and France, respectively, and wants to "serve her people" as they do. The Arafat couple plans to move to Jericho "by the end of the year," and "navigate between Golan and Jericho" thereafter, she said. Mrs. Arafat, 30, conceded life with her 63-year-old husband, Yasser Arafat, could be "difficult." "His masculine entourage is not yet used to the fact that he has a wife at his side who shares his life, who is closer to him than anyone else," she said. "It is the 'force of our love' that keeps going," she said, "because our story is, first of all, a great story. Why do you think, at over 60, he married me, and accepted?"

Arafat due in Paris in October

PARIS (AFP) — Palestine Leader Yasser Arafat is to come to Paris in the first half of October, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) representative in France, Leila Chaheidi, said in a newspaper interview. She told the Journal Du Dimanche Mr. Arafat wanted to come to France and "French authorities have said they wish to receive him." She said she thought: "would come in 'the first two weeks of October,'" adding that she was working with French authorities on finding a date that would suit French President Francois Mitterrand and other top officials. France, she said, should use its influence to prevent Europe from missing out on playing a role in Middle East peace efforts.

Sudan forms council to monitor newspapers

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan said Sunday it will form a council to supervise the press after parliament passed a bill allowing privately-owned newspapers. Head of State Lieutenant General Omar Hassan Al-Bashir will supervise the council, said the official news agency SUNA, quoting an official decree. The 21-member body will be chaired by Mohammed Saad Marouf, who heads the Sudanese Journalists' Union and the board of the state-owned newspaper Al-Sudan Al-Hadith (Modern Sudan). Sudan's first private newspaper is expected to go on sale by the end of the year.

Sudanese school ordered reopened

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan has ordered a school for southern refugee children in Khartoum to reopen after students' parents protested their transfer to Arabic language schools. The television said on Saturday the Mawdidi Secondary School would reopen Monday one week after students' parents staged a sit-in to order to close schools for the southerners. Most southern Sudan students displaced by civil war speak English as a first language. Mawdidi school will stay open for two years so students can complete studies in English. The television report did not say what would happen to other refugee schools.

UNESCO head due in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Director-General Federico Mayor is due here Monday on a visit aimed at securing the return by Iraq of cultural treasures taken during its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Mr. Mayor told the official Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) before leaving for the emirate that attempts to UNESCO to persuade Iraq to return Kuwaiti cultural assets were continuing. Mr. Mayor will be received by Kuwaiti Emir Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at the start of his three-day visit.

U.N. official pledges to get Afghans home

PESHAWAR (AP) — A top U.N. official toured a dusty refugee camp on Sunday and promised help in returning home. Afghans, refugees, the world's largest group of displaced people. "For us the war is not over," Mohammed Zahir Jabbarkhel, an Afghan refugee and tribal leader told Sadako Ogata, head of the U.N. High Commission for Refugees. Islamic groups in Afghanistan, last year ousted the communist government installed by the Soviet Union. But the 14-year-old conflict drags on as the groups battle among themselves for control of Kabul, the capital. Ms. Ogata, who is Japanese, met with residents of the Nasir Bagh refugee camp, home to 70,000 refugees near Peshawar, in northwest Pakistan. Residents live in mud huts, have set up schools and have electricity and running water.

Social Democrat leader named Ciller deputy

ANKARA (R) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel appointed Murat Karayalcin, new leader of the coalition Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP), as deputy prime minister and state minister on Sunday, Anatolian news agency said. "Demirel appointed Karayalcin as deputy prime minister and state minister after he met with the Prime Minister Tansu Ciller," it said. Karayalcin was elected to the post after a presidential election. The 52-year-old Ankara Mayor Karayalcin, 50, as its new leader on Sept. 11 to replace its 66-year-old outgoing leader and Deputy Prime Minister Erdal Inonu.

Algeria rights group urges mercy

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's official human rights watchdog has asked the head of state to commute death sentences on Muslim fundamentalists awaiting execution for an airport bomb attack. An Algiers court sentenced 38 Muslim fundamentalists to death in May for bombing Algiers airport last year and other crimes. Seven have already been shot. Five are in custody and 26 on the run after being condemned at the trial in their absence. The National Human Rights Monitoring Group, set up by the presidency, said it asked head of state Ali Kafi to "pardon those condemned to death in the attack on Houari Boumedienne airport, who have not been executed," the official news agency APS said at the weekend. Nine people were killed and more than 120 wounded in the attack on Algeria's main airport in August 1992.

Rao to discuss Kashmir conflict with Rafsanjani

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao will want to discuss Pakistan's role in the Kashmir conflict during an official visit to Iran starting on Monday, an Indian spokesman said.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training Muslim militants waging a three-year-old uprising against Indian rule in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan denies the charge but verbally backs some militant groups.

India sees Iran and China, both flanking Pakistan, as being close to Islamabad.

"We'll tell them we don't like what Pakistan is up to in Kashmir," the spokesman told reporters in New Delhi Sunday.

Iran, like many other countries, has criticised alleged human rights abuses by Indian security forces in Kashmir, the only Muslim majority region in mainly Hindu India.

India dismisses the charge as militant propaganda and says any proven abuses are punished. Police and hospital sources say at least 13,000 people have been killed in the rebellion since early 1990.

Indian diplomats say Mr. Rao might try to get Iran's help to resolve the dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir, which has sparked two wars between the two South Asian neighbours.

The Indian leader sought similar assurances from China on a visit to Beijing earlier this month, the diplomats added.

Mr. Rao's three-day visit will be the first by an Indian prime minister since Iran's 1979 Islamic

revolution. It follows a long-standing invitation by Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who will meet Mr. Rao Monday.

In an interview with India's daily Hindustan Times on Sunday, Mr. Rafsanjani said the Kashmir violence was bad for both India and Kashmiris.

"This is an issue that has several parties to it. We have to stop judgement at this point and see that a solution can be found," he said, without commenting directly on Pakistan's position.

Mr. Rafsanjani said that India, Iran and China, three of Asia's biggest countries, should work together to raise an effective Asian voice in world affairs.

He said he would also raise the subject of India's sizeable Muslim minority with Mr. Rao.

Iran has criticised the razing of the 16th century Babri Mosque by Hindu militants last December in the North Indian town of Ayodhya. At least 2,000 people were killed in Hindu-Muslim riots which followed the demolition.

India has the world's second biggest Muslim population after Indonesia, although Hindus outnumber them by more than eight to one.

During his three-day visit, Mr. Rao is also expected to meet Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, other high-ranking Iranian officials and top businessmen.

Mr. Rao, 72-year-old Rao heads a high-level delegation that will include Minister of State for External Affairs R. L. Bhatia, Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit and officials of the External Affairs Ministry.

Orthodox Jews tell Michael Jackson to beat it

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — American pop star Michael Jackson faced screaming orthodox Jewish protesters and a barricade of metal fences and chairs Saturday as he tried to approach the ancient western wall.

Hounded by charges of child molestation, the orange-lipstick Jackson bowed his head and twisted his locks as he was whisked through Jerusalem's walled Old City.

The singer arrived in Israel Friday to give two concerts in Tel Aviv, and travelled to occupied Jerusalem for sight-seeing Saturday.

Israel's chief Rabbi Yisrael Lau passed by the Old City communion and said, looking at Jackson: "I am delivering a lecture on atonement for next week's atonement day. Maybe he should attend."

Ardent orthodox Jews preparing for Yom Kippur, atonement day, the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar, barricaded the entrance leading to the

wall — the last remnant of the ancient Jewish temple — with metal gates, chairs and prayer tables.

They clanged on the barriers, shouting: "Shabbos, shabbos, do not desecrate the Sabbath."

The Jewish Sabbath, which begins Friday afternoon and ends Saturday evening, is a Biblically-mandated day of rest when all work, including the use of cameras, is prohibited.

The square adjacent to the wall, normally sedate and celestial on a Sabbath, was transformed into a mad rampage of fans and paparazzi.

The "no photographing on Sabbath" sign was run over in the rush to take pictures of the star. Jackson, topped with his trademark black fedora, with curly locks straining out of his hair, did not differ much in appearance from the Hassidic men at prayer, perhaps except for his make-up.

Denied stroking the stones that millions of others have for the past 2,000 years, the king of pop, escorted by two children and his

band of security guards, was restricted to the square.

He circled the plaza a few times, surrounded by hundreds of admiring fans.

Jackson waved his mole-spotted hand a couple of times, giggled some and scowled once when the pushing enthusiasts got too close.

"Go home, Michael Jackson," screamed David Katz, 32, a religious seminary student. "You are an abomination."

But another seminarian, Avraham Tiller, 29, was part of the pack that chased Jackson's six-car-convo and 60 armed guards from one end of Jerusalem's Old City to the other.

Tiller arrived at the western wall, his grey Sabbath clothes soaked with sweat, with dozens of other die-hard fans and photographers.

"I have never heard his music," he said, shrugging his shoulders and smiling. "But I had to see why so many people pay so much to see him."

Israel's chief rabbinate almost kept Jackson from coming to Israel when he announced in May that he would perform just after the Sabbath ends.

The rabbinate explained that this would encourage concertgoers to desecrate the Sabbath by driving to the concert park early in the day so as to get good spots for the show.

The show was subsequently rescheduled for Sunday and Tuesday night.

Jackson was supposed to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the site tradition holds to be the burial spot of Christ, but he postponed it due to the commotion.

Israel Radio said he was to visit sites holy to the three religions Sunday.

Jackson's tour has been haunted by a 13-year-old boy's accusations that the 35-year-old performer molested him. The singer has denied the allegations and his security consultant says they are part of a \$20 million extortion plot.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	L'Esprit Emerville
19:00	News in French
19:15	The Weekly Sport Magazine
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Golden Girls
21:10	Thirtysomething
22:00	News in English
22:30	Le Gerfaut
PRAYER TIMES	
05:00	Fajr
06:18	(Sunrise) Duha
12:29	Dhuhr
15:59	Asr
18:41	Maghrib
19:59	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellish, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph's Church Tel. 624570	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrasanta Church Tel: 62266	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 62541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 623295	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623824, 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
There will be a gradual drop in temperatures which become around average. Winds will be northwesterly, moderate occasionally becoming so. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min/Max temp: 20/31	
Aqaba: 24/37	
Deserts: 18/35	

JORDAN VALLEY	
23/36	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Rami Mawad	794788
Dr. Khalil Al-Jalal	740740
Dr. Mohammad Omar	612232
Dr. Mohammad Lohbadch	683585
Firas pharmacy	661912
Perdous pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	637055
Nairouh pharmacy	623072
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shamsan pharmacy	637660
Nairouh pharmacy	623072
Najib pharmacy	647632
BEIRUT:	
Dr. Maad Sharairi	248506
Alqad pharmacy	(-)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Yousef Abu Sa'd	989000
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Emergency	630341
Rescue Police	192, 61111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	843402
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	661646
Complaints	897467
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	630321
Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	774111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Kadhi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Aklich Maternity, J. Amn	642412
Majal Amman Maternity	642262
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164
Palatine, Shamsan	664171/4
Shamsan Hospital	669131
University Hospital	843545
Al-Muassir Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164
Italian, Al-Muassir	77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf	775112/6
Army, Marka	891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/30
Amal Hospital	674155
ZARQA:	
Zigra Govt. Hospital	09198323
Zigra National Hospital	09190060
Ron Sina Hospital	09198672
Al-Hijra Modern Hospital	09199090
BEIRUT:	
Princess Basmah Hospital	02127555



Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday welcomes a visiting group of German tourists in Petra. The 50 German women are all named Petra (Petra photo)

Queen welcomes 'Petras' to Petra

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday met with a German tourist delegation in Petra.

Sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, the delegation's visit is part of a public relations campaign to promote Jordan as a tourist destination for Germans.

The campaign, "Petras in Petra" was an innovative idea that brought to Jordan 50 German women named "Petra," which happens to be one of the most popular female names among Germans.

The 50 German "Petras" spent two days in Jordan's Petra, one of the world's most fascinating tourist attractions.

The invitation to the Kingdom received an overwhelming response. The 50 German

"Petras" were chosen from more than 5,000 "Petra" applicants.

The Queen welcomed the members of the delegation and wished them an enjoyable stay in Jordan.

Receiving Queen Noor upon arrival were the Ministry of Tourism Secretary General Nasri Atallah, the mayor of Petra, as well as the chief of police and the district officer. The Queen was accompanied by Minister of Tourism Yassir Hikmat.

Mr. Atallah told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that it was because of the past two years of intensive campaign in Europe that larger groups are now visiting the Kingdom's tourist attractions.

Since last year Jordan has regained its tourism momentum with at least 15,000 tourists from Germany alone visiting the Kingdom, added Mr. Atallah.

He said that in the wake of the Gulf crisis, only 5,000 tourists from Germany came to the Kingdom.

Referring to the tourism campaign which was launched in cooperation with Royal Jordanian (RJ) and local tourist and travel agents in Jordan, Mr. Atallah said at least half a million leaflets and posters were distributed to Germany to promote Jordan's tourist attractions and the ministry invited German journalists to visit the Kingdom in order to orient the German public on the treasures of the country.

Crown Prince says PLO-Israel deal has impact on Jordan, but it is not harmful

Success of self-rule first phase depends on Jordanian assistance

AMMAN (Petra) — There is no question that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel accord has become a reality "but one has to remember that it is Jordan that is most directly affected by the impact of this agreement," said His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday evening.

"This does not mean that Jordan is facing danger or harm as a result of the accord, but rather the Kingdom has strong religious and spiritual ties to Palestine and Jerusalem (that it has to be concerned about)," said the Crown Prince at a meeting with a select group of University of Jordan professors.

Prince Hassan said that Jordan can in no way be worried by the Palestinians realising their aims and regaining their rights, "nor does Jordan feel threatened as a regime or entity."

On the contrary, "we support anyone and anything which would back the Arabs' rights in Palestine, and we will continue to work towards achieving this goal," the Crown Prince said. Prince Hassan also said that the first phase of the self-rule accord

will not succeed without the help of Jordanian economic and security assistance.

"It was Jordan that hosted the first Palestine National Council (PNC) meeting in Jerusalem in the mid-sixties, at a time when Jordan was in control of the West Bank and in a position to deny the PLO this right," said the Crown Prince.

He said other Arab states had created their own Palestinian armed militias and thus interfered in the affairs of the Palestinians and their national cause.

"These militias were created in the name of Palestine, but existed in Jordan which itself did not create any such militia in order to interfere in Palestinian affairs," added Prince Hassan. "Jordan was the first to demand an end to the sufferings of Palestinian brothers, and therefore, the Kingdom hopes that the 'Gaza-Jericho first' accord will serve to end Palestinian suffering."

With reference to the University of Jordan's educational efforts, Prince Hassan said education constitutes the most important areas of Jordanian investment,



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday meets with a select group of University of Jordan professors (Petra photo)

adding that sufficient care should be given to shaping curricula and courses to serve the needs of the local community.

He also voiced his support of a

suggestion made by Dean of Post Graduate Studies Ahmad Rabaiaa that the university adopt and promote a Jordanian code of honour. Prince Hassan said such

a code should embody the sense of national unity in Jordan. The Crown Prince said he would convey this proposal to His Majesty King Hussein.

PLA starts training at Amman Police Academy

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Members of the Palestine Liberation Army's (PLA) Badr Force stationed in Jordan have started training at the Amman Police Academy ahead of their deployment in the occupied territories, PLO officials said.

The officials said units of 400 soldiers were being trained separately in all aspects of police work, including riot control, anti-terrorism measures, forensic medicine and crime investigations.

The Badr Force is estimated to number 3,000. Each unit is expected to undergo two months of training. The course started early this month.

The PLO officials said a batch of 37 Palestinians from the occupied territories returned home after undergoing training as bodyguards.

They are deployed to protect Palestinian leaders and the Orient House in East Arab Jerusalem, which is expected to house the Jerusalem base of the Palestinian self-rule authority envisaged under the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreement signed in Washington on Sept. 13.

"They are now assigned as bodyguards for Faisal Hussein,

Hanan Ashrawi and other delegates in the peace talks with Israel," said the PLO official.

Mr. Hussein is the overall head of the Palestinian delegation to the 23-month-old Middle East peace talks. Dr. Ashrawi is the spokesperson for the delegation.

The PLO official said another batch of 27 Palestinians also had returned to the occupied West Bank after undergoing police training in Amman. They will be deployed immediately after the Palestinian economy agreement takes effect on Oct. 13, the official said.

"They will be the advance guard for the central security force in the Palestinian autonomous area and will be in charge of all aspects of security," said the official.

Less than 100 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip are currently undergoing police training in Egypt. In addition, President Hosni Mubarak has approved a PLO request that the Aio Jalut Brigade of the PLA stationed in Egyptian territory be transformed as a police force, the officials said.

"Similar requests have been forwarded to all governments hosting PLA units and we have received positive replies from most," said a senior PLO official.

These governments included those of Yemen, Iraq, Tunisia,



Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) forces train in riot control at Amman Police Academy (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

Algeria and Sudan, they said, indicating that the PLO was facing difficulties to get Syrian and Libyan approvals.

Libya has openly rejected the Israel-PLO accord. Syria has not formally commented on the accord, except to say that the Palestinians were free to adopt whatever decision they found fit to serve their cause.

But the state-controlled media in Damascus had kept up a crescendo of criticism of the accord.

As a tactic to draw the PLA

units based in Syria — Al Hittin Forces — to the PLO umbrella, the PLO leadership has tentatively named Brigadier Tareq Al Kadar, who heads the Syrian-based units, as overall commander of the PLA.

The PLO officials said they were not aware of any response from the Syrians to the PLO request to move the PLA unit from Syria.

Mr. Hussein has estimated that the occupied territories need between 20,000 and 30,000

policemen to maintain law and order and ensure security. The PLA was established in 1964 under an Arab League decision with an initial strength of 12,000 to 14,000 fighters, who saw action in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

The nucleus of the PLA was forced to move from Lebanon following the Israeli invasion. Its ranks swelled with irregulars when Palestinians, also forced to leave Lebanon, joined it in various countries.

Kingdom appreciates Germany's role in educating Jordanian physicians

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas Sunday voiced Jordan's appreciation of Germany for the facilities and assistance offered to Jordanian physicians and specialists to study medicine in German universities.

A total of 347 of the Kingdom's specialists and physicians have so far graduated from German colleges and are contributing towards the development of the medical profession in Jordan, said Dr. Malhas at the opening of a three-day German-Jordanian medical conference held at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman.

Those doctors who graduated

from medical schools in Germany have introduced modern techniques in the treatment of various cases, thus helping to enrich the Jordanian experiment in the health care field, added Dr. Malhas.

Jordan Medical Association (JMA) Vice President Jaafar Huneiti addressed the opening session, saying the JMA has drawn up plans for scientific conferences designed to raise the standard of medical profession in Jordan and at the same time maintain bridges of cooperation with German and other specialists who can benefit their Jordanian counterparts with their own experiences.

Because of the continued care and encouragement by His Majesty King Hussein, Jordanian institutions have attained a high level of excellence, attracting patients from various parts of the Arab World, added Dr. Huneiti. Butrus Tawil, who represented the German specialists at the conference, paid tribute to the King and government of Jordan for hosting the conference which was organised by the Jordanian Surgeons Association in cooperation with the German-Jordanian Society for the Care of the Blind.

A total of 250 specialists from Jordan, Arab and foreign countries including Germany are taking part in the discussions.

CONDOLENCES

The Editor and staff of the Jordan Times deeply mourn the untimely death of

Mohammad Arar

son of their friend and former editor of Al Ra'i Suleiman Arar.

May God bless his soul.

Our sincere condolences to Mr. Arar and his family.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

PSD chief reviews security topics with Omani envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Public Security Department Director Maj. Gen. Abdul Rahman Al Udwan Sunday discussed with Omani Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Sultan Al Bousaidi scopes of cooperation in the security fields.

Sheikh Tamimi thanks King

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddine Al Khathib Al Tamimi Sunday voiced appreciation to His Majesty King Hussein for appointing him as Chief Islamic Justice, in addition to his duties as the King's advisor for Islamic Affairs. In a reply message, Sheikh Tamimi pledged loyalty and allegiance to the King and the Hashemite family and said he would actively discharge the duties assigned to him, including the follow up on the restoration of the Dome of the Rock, the rebuilding of the Seladdin minbar and the restoration of Prophet Mohammad's companions' tombs.

Omani foreign minister to arrive for talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Omani Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Youssef Ben Alawi arrives here today (Monday) on a two-day visit to Jordan for talks with his Jordanian counterpart. Talal Sataan Al Hassan on bilateral relations and Arab and international issues.

Brotherhood condemns Jordan-Israel agenda

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Muslim Brotherhood Sunday condemned what it called the "Jordanian-Jewish agreement" and called on the Jordanian public to stand against the Judaisation of the region. In a statement sent to the local press, the Brotherhood said the "Jordanian-Jewish" agreement on the common agenda was no less dangerous than the PLO-Israeli deal.

Conference on women in democracy scheduled

AMMAN (J.T.) — The General Federation of Jordanian Women announced Saturday that it plans a conference on the role of Jordanian women in the democratic process to be held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Sept. 27 at the Jordan University for Women. The announcement said that a press conference to shed light on the coming conference would be held on Sept. 23 at the Federation's headquarters in Amman.

Preparations begin for tree planting

AMMAN (Petra) — A campaign started in 18 governorates and district governorates to prepare the ground for the tree planting season. The Higher Council for Voluntary Work working in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture has arranged for school, community colleges and university students to carry out the initial work of digging holes for the trees to be planted at the start of the season in January.

Minister assigns land for youth

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Sunday appointing Youth Minister Abdullah Oweidat as Acting Minister of Culture during the absence of Mahmoud Al Samra who is abroad. Mr. Oweidat announced Sunday that the Ministry of youth will assign several state-owned lands in the central Jordan Valley region for youth centres. Speaking at a meeting with heads of local sports clubs, the minister requested that the clubs set up a union and select the most eligible players.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of paintings and photographic pictures of old Baghdad at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Permanent exhibition of 58 artists and "Chair" Exhibition at Darat Al Fuzan of the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luwbeh (10 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Fridays 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.) Tel. 643251-2.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Bishara Najjar at Esthela Art Gallery, Amra Shopping Centre.

SCIENTIFIC EXHIBITION

★ Annual scientific nursing exhibition at the exhibition hall in the University of Jordan's Student Affairs Department.

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People above factions

THE TEN groups opposed to the leadership of Yasser Arafat have a legitimate right to voice their opposition to the deal he has struck with the Israelis as long as it is expressed in a democratic manner. Judging by the wording of their decision in Damascus Saturday, however, the antagonists of the PLO appear to be opting for all means including non-democratic ways in a bid to foil the recent Israel-PLO pact on interim self-government on the basis of Gaza-Jericho first formula.

The reported agreement between Fatah and Palestinian Islamists to avoid a bloody confrontation over their differences on the accord remains unconfirmed in the wake of repeated denials by Hamas spokesmen outside the occupied territories that no such understanding was ever reached. Unlike the other Palestinian opposition forces, Hamas may have a vested interest in only delaying an agreement with Israel and not in preventing one since the tide has been progressing in their favour in the last few years at the expense of Fatah. In fact, the gradual eclipse of the mainstream Palestinian organisation in favour of Hamas might have well been one of the main factors behind the PLO's decision to hasten the accord with Israel. Against this backdrop, a reconciliation or even a modus vivendi between Fatah and Hamas, the two main Palestinian groups, could seal the fate of the PLO-Israel deal.

The same could not be said about the other Palestinian factions working against the accord since their grassroots support is not as substantial. This is not to mention the fact that some Palestinian organisations under or outside the PLO umbrella are simply stooges for various Arab regimes. Still the threat of dangerous clashes among the Palestinians looms large in the horizon prompting His Majesty King Hussein to appeal to all Palestinians to close ranks at this critical stage in the peace process. During his meeting with journalists Saturday, the King confirmed yet again that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that such recognition was blessed by Arab and non-Arab countries. Under such circumstances, Jordan will side with Palestinian legitimacy and not the opposition even though the rejectionists have all the right to express their points of view freely and democratically. This posture reflects the extent of Jordan's determination to respect and support an independent Palestinian decision on what is acceptable and what is not in the context of the peace process.

In the final analysis, the final arbiter of what is legitimate and what is not in terms of the recent PLO-Israel agreement should be the Palestinian people. The latest polls conducted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip indicate that an overwhelming majority of the Palestinians inside the occupied territories support the Sept. 13 signing of the declaration of principles on Palestinian interim self-rule.

According to the survey taken by the Independent Centre for Palestinian Research and Studies in the wake of the White House ceremony marking the dawn of a new chapter in Palestinian-Israeli relations, no less than 65 per cent favour the accord. This finding, if corroborated, should end the debate on where the Palestinian people stand on the deal. Once general elections are conducted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the controversy over the Palestinian position would be laid to rest once and for all. Till that moment in time arrives, the various Palestinian movements should strive to make the supreme interests of their people the overriding concern. Vision and responsibility on the part of the leadership of all groups would require keeping their differences within reasonable bounds.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily cautioned against excessive optimism over the PLO-Israel deal. It said that one cannot attach great hopes to Israeli promises, even if they are written down in a document, since the Zionists are not expected to give the Arabs and the Palestinians much as long as the Arab World is divided and in disarray. It is wrong to give this deal more appreciation than it deserves because the Palestinians and the Arabs have not been striving for so little and they continue to hope to have all their usurped lands liberated, in implementation of U.N. resolutions, said the paper. It is good to see part of the usurped land freed as a result of this limited agreement, but it is wrong to give up the struggle for the liberation of all parts of the Arab land, added the paper. It is right for us to rejoice over the return of the usurped land, but we have to realise that what has been retaken is very small area, that the efforts should never cease and unity of ranks should be established so that the final joy can come about, continued the paper. After more than 50 years of strife and struggle the Palestinians and the Arabs deserve more than what they have acquired now and they deserve to have their lands given back to them, said the daily. It said that we deserve more compensation for the long sufferings, the siege and the humiliation suffered over the years of the hands of our enemies and their allies.

THE CODE of honour concluded between Hamas and PLO detainees in Israeli jails should be promoted to encompass all the Palestinian factions not only inside prisons but also in the large Palestinian prison of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, said Ahmad Al Mislh, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. The code of honour among the prison inmates stands out as a symbol for the rest of the Palestinian people as it pledges no infighting among the Palestinian people as it pledges no infighting among the Palestinians themselves once the land has been liberated, said the writer. There is a big difference between agreement on paper and application on the ground and therefore, we expect the formation of committees to apply the inmates' deal on the ground because no one would like to see the Palestinians at each other's throats, to do service to the Israelis and defeat the Palestinian people's aspiration, called the writer.

Weekly Political Pulse

Jordanian-Israeli deal — linguistic lacunae or moot issues?

By Waleed Sadi

SURPRISINGLY, the Jordanian-Israeli "agenda" agreement drew little attention and scrutiny. It seems that the limelight directed on the PLO-Israeli deal prevented a closer look at the Jordanian-Israeli accord even though it is also very significant and of far-reaching implications.

To begin with, a closer look at the agreement on the agenda between Israel and Jordan would reveal that the deal goes much beyond a mere consent to a listing of topics to be discussed and negotiated at a later stage. As a matter of fact, the Jordanian-Israeli accord is more of a declaration of principles than an agenda as such. But whether it is viewed as an agenda or a declaration of principles or a combination of both, the issue remains moot in light of Jordan's commitment not to sign a final peace treaty with Israel until the other Arab parties are also ready to sign such peace pacts. The key element in this context is the commitment to achieve comprehensive peace treaties between Israel and the concerned Arab parties and not whether Jordan and Israel have put their seal of approval on an agenda or on something much more basic.

Still, the text of the document that was signed in Washington between Amman and Tel Aviv last Tuesday, hours after the celebrated signature of the Palestinian-Israeli accord, appears to be lacking no matter what its nature is.

Admittedly, it is a very risky exercise to punch holes in any piece of legal document by people who were not privy to the gritty negotiating process that produced such a document. In principle, only the negotiating teams comprehend fully what went into the text agreed upon in terms of legal imports and political, security and economic commitments.

Having said that, I venture to submit a few comments on what I perceive as basic omissions in the draft released to the public already. My first comment is about the overall text as such. Even if the text is regarded as an agenda, one would have thought that

after one year of negotiations the "agenda" would be a bit more precise and coherent. The idea behind producing an agenda is to spell out all the issues to be negotiated in great specificity rather than in obscure general terminology. Otherwise, it would not be an agenda according to the elementary definition of the term. The language used in the text is generally drafted in non-legal terms. In many ways, the intentions of the parties are left too vague for the purposes of an agenda or a declaration of principles.

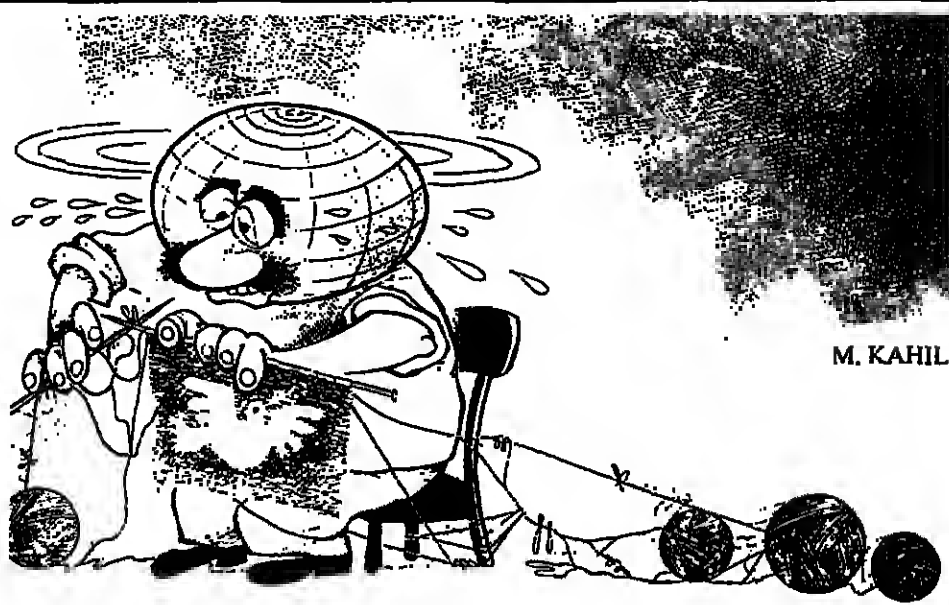
When, for example, the parties simply say under the very controversial subject of water that the two sides are committed to secure the rightful water shares of each other or that the two parties will search for ways to alleviate the water shortage in both countries, without specifying the basis and criteria on which such a resolution of the water problem will be negotiated, then there is something dangerously incoherent in the agenda formulation. The same problem appears to plague the reference to the subject of refugees, where international law is made the criteria for its settlement. It seems that the Israeli side did not accept the reference to the relevant U.N. resolutions, notably Resolution 194, on the subject of Palestinian refugees as I must presume that the Jordanian side made a last-ditch effort to incorporate the reference to U.N. decisions. The point here is that the U.N. General Assembly resolution on Palestinian refugees and expellees may not necessarily be part and parcel of customary international law, and the reference to it would have been preferable.

But what really causes me concern is Paragraph 5, where there is an attempt to deal with borders and territorial matters. Where is, for example, the reference to the territorial issue of the Gulf of Aqaba? Even if this subject could be discussed elsewhere within the framework of multilateral peace talks, the mention of the Gulf of Aqaba in the basic document binding the two sides should have been safeguarded.

And this is not all. Against the backdrop of our insistence that Jordan has a stake in the religious future of Jerusalem, why is there not even a whisper about this Jordanian concern? Both His Majesty King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan have been clear about Jordanian legitimate interest in the Holy City, when it comes to its religious shrines and places. This concern does not appear to be reflected in the text at all.

My greatest concern, however, is about the language used to express the terms of reference for the delineation of Jordanian-Israeli final borders. The problem, as far as I see it from a juristic perspective, applies equally to the original paragraph 5 and as amended. Both drafts make the following stipulations in the context of the definitive delimitation and demarcation of international borders between Jordan and Israel on the basis of the British Mandate frontiers: "Without prejudice to the status of any territories that came under Israeli military government control" later changed to "without prejudice to the status of any territories that came under Israeli military government control in 1967." "This, I respectfully submit, is unfortunate language because either text may imply that the status of the West Bank is undetermined and open for grabs.

Whether we subscribe to the legal notion that Jordan still has sovereignty rights over the West Bank, because it has never taken legal measures to transfer sovereignty to any side, or we accept the recent pronouncement by Crown Prince Hassan to the effect that Jordan passed on sovereignty only to the Palestinians, the reference to the occupied territories should have been articulated in a different manner. The 1967 "boundaries" should have been given a more sacrosanct status in order to erase any doubt about the status of the West Bank. As is, the status of the West Bank was left hanging in the air, something I am sure the Jordanian negotiating teams never intended.



M. KAHIL

PLO-Israeli agreement — no more lost opportunities

By Pascal B. Karmy

Who would have predicted that the chief Palestinian guerrilla leader Yasser Arafat, who had fired the first shot at midnight of Dec. 31, 1964-January 1, 1965 and inaugurated thereby the Palestinian resistance movement against Israel, would be the peacemaker with Israel? Who would have thought that Yasser Arafat and his guerrilla Fatah organisation, which were claiming all Palestine, would accept now a limited self-rule in only a fraction of the Palestinian territory?

Mr. Arafat and his cohort and other Palestinian resistance movements have consistently and determinedly fought Israel, almost single-handedly, for more than a quarter of a century. The heroic Palestinian intifada, which started in December 1987, had its effect on Israel and, as a consequence, it was forced to change its policy towards the PLO and to make a deal with it. Of course, the intifada had its sacrifices: thousands of Palestinians were killed and untold misery and impoverishment were caused to the people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

No Palestinian would forget how the PLO fighters were bound in Tripoli (Lebanon) by antagonist Palestinians. Who would forget the almost hopeless guerrilla fighters in Beirut in 1982 during Israel's siege of the city. No Arab went to their rescue and they were thus left to face their destiny.

Israel, on the other hand, could not longer continue the struggle against the two million Palestinians or so in the occupied territories or to govern them for ever. Israel was fighting hopelessly the tide of strong Palestinian nationalism and it must have realised that its existence could not effectively be recognised without Palestinian recognition in the first place. The recognition by Egypt with the Camp David Agreement of 1979 did not lead to recognition by any other Arab state.

After all the pain and suffering endured by the Palestinians, can Mr. Arafat be blamed for becoming politician put his sword in its scabbard and strike a deal with Israel? This deal constitutes a first step towards the foundation stone of a future Palestine state. The creation of a Palestine state is, in my opinion, inevitable as Israel cannot change the natural course of history.

In the past, the Palestinians had lost some opportunities which could have enabled them to form at least an independent mini-state. But they wanted all or

nothing. This policy had led nowhere since the unaltered Balfour Declaration of 1917. On the contrary, those lost opportunities led Palestinians to misery, suffering and hardships and to the scattering of the Palestinians in the four corners of the world. In 1939, the British authorities issued the White Paper whereby a Palestinian state could have been established within ten years had the Arab, Higher Committee, the then representative of the Palestinian people, accepted it in principle and undertook immediately to cooperate with the British government for its implementation. Again in 1947, the Palestinians, encouraged by the Arab states, did not accept the United Nations Resolution 181 on the partition of Palestine, which envisaged the creation of two states, one Arab and another Jewish. It is said with some truth that the history of the Palestinians is a history of lost opportunities.

There are of course advantages and disadvantages to the PLO-Israel agreement. One of the important advantages is that the Palestinians will get rid of the Israeli army's cruel occupation under which they have endured persecution, oppression, destruction of their homes and death of thousands of people. Another advantage is that some hundred thousands of Palestinian refugees who were expelled or fled during and after the 1967 war are expected to return to their homes in the occupied territories. The majority of Palestinians working or living in the Gulf states can return to their homes particularly on retirement or when work is no longer available in the Gulf states.

Moreover, the agreement recognises the Palestinians as a people with national rights (and not simply as Arab inhabitants living in Israeli territory) as used to be alleged by Gold Meir Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. The agreement forms a framework whereby all Palestinians' problems will be dealt with during the interim self-government arrangements provided for in the agreement and its annexes. The solving of these problems, coupled with the implementation of the agreement, will gradually lead to the development of a Palestine state. This is a far cry from the declaration of the unaltered Golda Meir where she stated: "There are no Palestinians, where are they?" It may be added that by this agreement, Israel has implicitly relinquished its utopian ideal of "Great Israel."

It cannot, however, be denied that there are some negative elements in the agreement as far as the Palestinians and the Arabs are concerned. Those elements concern the questions of Jerusalem, the settlements and the refugees, which will be negotiated at the beginning of the third year of the interim period (see Article V of the agreement and 'Article IV of the annexes under the title "specific understandings and agreements"). There are no specific indications on what basis negotiations will be undertaken, especially concerning Jerusalem which is still regarded by Israel as one unified city and its permanent capital.

However, according to United Nations Resolution 181 of 1947, Jerusalem should constitute a corpus separatum under international control, but it is more acceptable that it should become the capital of the Palestine state and of the Jewish state, in as much as the eastern part of Jerusalem is considered an occupied territory, belonging to the Palestinians, and from which Israel should withdraw according to Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 to which reference is made in the PLO-Israel agreement. As to the Jewish settlements, they are illegal, according to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Protocol of 1977 and should either be dismantled or come under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian self-government. The refugees of 1948 should be given the option to return to their homes and live in peace with Israel or be compensated as provided for in U.N. resolution 194 of 1947. Those are the basis on which Jerusalem, the settlements and the refugees should be resolved between Israel and the Palestine self-government authority.

U.N.'s moment — who are you going to call?

By Victoria Graham
The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Once the cold war ended, a world in turmoil began dialing up the United Nations. Summing up mediators, peacekeepers and good Samaritans to the rescue. But the emergency phone may soon go unanswered.

The 48th General Assembly convenes Tuesday as the United Nations hunkers down for a spell of limited ambitions, short of both money and political will. The world body faces its gravest financial crisis. The United States and some other governments among the 184 members remain delinquent in paying assessments, and Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali warns his cash on hand will last only into early October.

The U.N. Security Council, meanwhile, is wavering before the world's most glaring affront to peace — the bloody Serb and Croat carve-up of Bosnia-Herzegovina — and would be hard-pressed to take on new challenges. Combatting charges of mismanagement has become a major preoccupation of the U.N. leadership.

"There is fraud, waste and abuse in any big organisation," said Richard Thornburgh, the former U.S. attorney general who stepped down this year as a U.N. undersecretary-general. "The question is what you do about it, and precious little is done at the U.N."

The budget troubles have been building for years.

The U.N. regular budget is about \$1 billion a year, and annual peacekeeping spending — a separate budget — has ballooned to an estimated \$3.5 billion. As of Aug. 31, arrears by member states totalled \$839 million for the regular budget, and \$1.08 billion for peacekeeping.

Of that, U.N. statistics show, the U.S. government owes \$517 million to the regular budget and \$261 million to peacekeeping. Russia and Japan are next in delinquencies. Some point out that the overall U.N. shortfall of approximately \$2 billion equals the cost of just one American B-2 stealth bomber.

The U.S. government had been paying off its U.N. arrears the past three years as part of a five-year programme. But Congress has not appropriated funds to pay arrears after October — a sign of wobbling commitment.

Ms. Thornburgh, who left his U.N. post six months ago, has delivered a scathing report on U.N. management practices, calling the budget process "surreal," and saying the organisation seems simply unwilling to get rid of incompetent staff.

He cited "overstaffing, deadwood... and lack of good middle management." He said the world body lacks the proper means to investigate and punish, and advocated establishment of an independent inspector general's post.

Mr. Ghali has stopped short of that — instead bringing back a retired U.N. auditor and fellow Egyptian to look at allegations of impropriety. He also has promised that U.N. restructuring will not cost anyone a job.

In the peacekeeping area alone, problems include the purchase of eight times as many vehicles as necessary for the Cambodia operation, the wrongful diversion of supplies from warehouses and allegations that contract awards for helicopter

service were biased. U.N. officials say they are vigorously investigating such allegations and will punish those who are guilty.

Financial strains have forced Mr. Ghali to order cuts in travel and in hiring temporary help and to limit meeting hours and translation and documentation services. Officials say the cash shortage may mean no mid-October paychecks for U.N. staff.

"We are going through a transition period," said Melissa Wells, an American who succeeded Mr. Thornburgh as U.N. management chief. "It is difficult to adjust from having done things in one way to doing them in new ways and funding them on a sustained basis."

She said new demands being made in peacekeeping and other areas show that member governments "see a very active and important role for the U.N. in the future."

"U.N. statistics show the U.S. government owes \$517 million to the regular budget and \$261 million to peacekeeping. Russia and Japan are next in delinquencies. Some point out that the overall U.N. shortfall of approximately \$2 billion equals the cost of just one American B-2 Stealth bomber."

But relative successes in the peacekeeping arena, such as in Cambodia, are mixed with setbacks — as in Angola, where a U.N. peace plan failed to disarm the combatants and a civil war reignited, and particularly in the former Yugoslavia and Somalia.

In Bosnia, the world organisation's humanitarian mission has managed to save many lives with food and medical relief, but the U.N. Security Council has lacked the consensus needed for decisive action to end the war. It has not even been able to deploy the soldiers needed to protect what it itself declared to be "safe areas" for threatened Muslims in Bosnia.

In Somalia, where firm U.N. action has been taken, critics say peacekeepers are acting more like Rambo than good Samaritans, as they attack supporters of a local warlord.

The United Nations and other international groups successfully fed the famine-stricken in the African nation, but questions are now arising about the U.N. mission and mandate. Critics worry that the United Nations appears to have fallen into a partisan role in Somalia's many-sided conflict.

When that happened in the Belgian Congo in the early 1960s, it undermined one of the early pivotal peace missions in U.N. history.

Beset by such troubles, and financing itself week by week, the United Nations will be lowering its expectations as world statesmen converge on New York in the coming weeks for the new General Assembly session.

Years of bitterness, months of secrecy, a historic moment

By Charles J. Hanley
The Associated Press

THE ISRAELI sergeant stands beside his tank on the road to Beirut, his helmet off, his leathery face streaming with sweat under a burning midday sun.

He is a veteran of 1967 and 1973. This is his third war. It is 1982, and he has had enough.

"It's no good. It's no good to go to Beirut. There are civilians, babies, families there. The people of Israel don't want it," he says. "What we should do is sit down and talk."

Talk? With the PLO? "With the PLO."

The sergeant and his tank crew did drive on to a rendezvous with the Palestine Liberation Organisation that fateful summer, along with thousands of other Israeli soldiers. But it wasn't to talk.

For weeks after relentless week, Israeli military poured steel and fire onto PLO units in the ruins of the Lebanese capital. The bloodied guerrillas finally retreated, scattering by sea and road from Beirut across the Arab World.

As his departing ship steamed away into the Mediterranean on Aug. 30, 1982, Yasser Arafat stood on deck and flashed an improbable V-for-victory sign. For the PLO chief and his humiliated fighters, defeat was complete.

"It will be a blow from which it will be hard to recover," pronounced Ariel Sharon, the Israeli defence minister who had managed to wipe the guerrilla threat from Lebanon.

Palestinian defiance gave way to despair, and desperate months yielded to years of bitterness. But the journey continued — from Beirut to Damascus to Tunis to Madrid. And eventually to a second meeting in snowy Norway, to the talks that secretary general knew had to come, and to another improbable gesture, a simple handshake between two old warriors on a peaceful lawn in Washington.

The story of the road back from Beirut is only a brief chapter in a long history of bane between two peoples bound to the same land.

The ancients battled over Palestine, and the current strife between Arab and Jew is rooted in the last century. Today, their enmity is steeped in memories of terror in places like Maalot and Deir Yassin, in the memory of 100,000 Arab and Israeli war dead, and in the miseries of camps where Palestinian Arab refugees, chased from their homes by Israel's armies, wait out their lives.

But the story of this brief chapter, and especially of the last months of heavy secret diplomacy, offers insights into the Palestinian and Israeli predicament, and into the hope for lasting peace.

Even before hope, the PLO needed a home when Mr. Arafat sailed from Beirut in 1982.

The PLO chairman quickly settled in Damascus, where Syrian President Hafez Assad proved to be a fleeting friend, siding with Palestinian "rejectionists" who mutilated against Mr. Arafat's willingness to consider a negotiated settlement with Israel.

One morning in June 1983, Mr. Assad gave Mr. Arafat six hours to get out of Syria. He flew to Tunisia, PLO headquarters for the next decade.

Mr. Arafat next turned for help to Jordan's King Hussein. The PLO and Jordanians announced they would form a joint delegation to seek peace with the Israelis.

But Israel was not interested. Memories were too fresh.

The Israeli leadership still reviled the PLO as a terrorist organisation, and demanded — be-

fore any contacts could be considered — that the Palestinian National Council, the PLO's "parliament", revoke its charter's call for replacing the Jewish state with a secular one.

By late 1985, the bloody cycles had resumed.

After three Israelis were slain in Cyprus, apparently by Palestinians, Israeli warplanes struck across the Mediterranean and bombed PLO headquarters outside Tunis. At least 70 people were killed, Mr. Arafat narrowly escaped injury.

A week later, out on the Mediterranean, Palestinians hijacked the cruise ship Achille Lauro and killed an elderly American Jew in a wheelchair. The PLO denied responsibility, but the shocking crime reinforced its terrorist image.

In early 1986, King Hussein ended their partnership because Mr. Arafat refused to unconditionally accept Security Council Resolution 242, the pivotal U.N. document that affirms Israel's right to exist.

Israel's defence minister, the stolid ex-General Yitzhak Rabin, told the 1.3 million Palestinians of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to "take their destiny in their hand" and cast off the PLO. Israeli settlers, meanwhile, continued to pour into the occupied lands by the thousands.

It was a new low point for Palestinians.

"As Palestinians, no one is listening to our voice," Khalil Al Wazir, Mr. Arafat's second in command, declared in an Associated Press interview. "What do you expect the people in occupied Palestine to do, except take a knife and kill the Israeli soldier who confiscated his house?"

The knives came out a year later. The territories exploded in an "intifada," an unprecedented uprising against the Israeli military occupation.

Mr. Wazir was marked as the mastermind. In April 1988, five months after the intifada began, Israeli commandos stormed his home in Tunis, caught him in the study and fired 170 bullets into his body.

The assassination only inflamed the youthful stone throwers of the West Bank and Gaza, whose rebellion became a daily display of the PLO's hold over the Palestinians. King Hussein relinquished his claim to speak for the occupied territories, leaving the Israeli leadership to confront the PLO — and its own domestic critics.

For one, Cabinet Minister Ezer Weizman, today Israel's president, complained that the unrest "is a result of a failure (by Israel) to even try to find a political solution to the conflict."

Could progress finally be made?

In November 1988, the representatives of the Palestinian "diaspora" — the Palestinian National Council — took a historic step: they accepted Resolution 242. "It's a bitter pill, but we had to swallow it," said Nabil Shaath, an author of the council declaration.

The implicit recognition of Israel via Resolution 242 began a drawn-out diplomatic dance between the sworn enemies, one whose final notes are still to be played.

At times the dance took on near-comic tones. Pressed by reporters in 1988 for an explicit acceptance of Israel — a "yes" or a "no" — Mr. Arafat snapped back: "What do you want? Do you want me to do a striptease?"

At that Geneva news conference, the PLO chairman did deliver a renunciation of terrorism, sought by the Israelis. But the PLO was not playing all its cards. Its charter, for example, still called for Israel's destruction.

By early 1989, however, U.S. diplomats were meeting quietly

with PLO representatives, and pressure built on Israel, whose coalition government was paralysed by squabbling between its right-wing Likud and left-wing Labour Party partners. It would not deal with the PLO. It would not stop building settlements in the West Bank — the true promised land to fervent Zionists.

Then an earthquake shook the Middle East. Iraq invaded Kuwait, an Arab-U.S. alliance drove back the aggressor, and suddenly everything seemed possible.

Syria was more flexible. The Soviets were no longer an anti-western sponsor of militant Arabs. The PLO was weaker, having supported Iraq. Israel, weary of battling the intifada, saw opportunities.

In October 1991, the Israelis and their main Arab foes sat down together in Madrid for a peace conference — for the first time in the four decades since Israel's founding.

George Bush urged the Israelis to make territorial compromises, and the Arabs to guarantee Israel's security.

"We seek peace, real peace," the U.S. president told the negotiators.

The diplomatic dance dredged on: Israel would deal only with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation not formally linked to the PLO.

That delegation proposed Palestinian elections for the occupied territories, including Arab-populated East Jerusalem, viewed by the Israelis as forever a part of its "eternal" capital. Israel rejected the idea. The talks bogged down.

But in mid-1992, two developments — one that didn't — gave peace its chance.

The Labour Party won Israel's elections on a peace platform. And, soon afterward, diplomats from Norway began approaching the new government about building a "back channel," direct contacts between Israel and the PLO.

But first, the indirect. An Israeli academic, historian Yair Hirschfeld, was discreetly delegated to "explore." In December 1992, at a London hotel, he had breakfast with Ahmad Qurei'a, a trusted Arafat lieutenant. They decided to proceed, with the Norwegians as "expedients."

On Jan. 20, 1993, as the world's eyes turned to Washington and the swearing-in of a confident new American president, Mr. Hirschfeld, Mr. Qurei'a and aides met in great secrecy at an old mansion in the woods southeast of Oslo. They weren't at all confident.

"Our mission was to see what was realistic, to check the mobiles and immobiles, what was flexible and what not," Mr. Hirschfeld later recalled.

In meeting after meeting, as they moved from estate to hotel to small private home, all under the watchful eye of Norway's foreign minister, Johan Jorgen Holst, and in a growing spirit of camaraderie, the Israeli professor and the Palestinian businessman stitched together the fragile fabric of peace.

In April, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres took a draft of the plan to Mr. Rabin, now prime minister. They upgraded the secret talks to the official level, sending a senior diplomat, Uri Saviv, to quietly see the deal through to completion with Mr. Qurei'a.

The motivation on both sides was clear: both urgently wanted some sign, any sign of movement in the endless peace process.

Mr. Arafat faced a powerful challenge from a militant Muslim fundamentalist movement in Gaza and the West Bank. He needed to show his PLO could

deliver. The new Labour government also wanted to show its effectiveness, and to take advantage of Mr. Arafat's weakness.

The foundation of the deal that emerged from at least 14 secret sessions over eight months was a historic agreement: the PLO would openly accept Israel as a rightful nation and work to end anti-Israeli violence, and Israel would openly confirm the PLO as the voice of the Palestinian people.

Beyond that, the peace plan was full of uncertainty: Palestinians would get substantial self-rule over the Gaza Strip, a refugee slum, and over the small West Bank town of Jericho. They would have a limited administrative role elsewhere in the occupied lands. Within three years, negotiations would begin on a permanent peace treaty defining who would control what in the long-contested promised land.

The plan does not address the questions of Jerusalem, repatriation of hundreds of thousands of refugees, or the future of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

On Aug. 20, with Mr. Peres in attendance, the negotiators initiated the agreement in Oslo. Then the secrecy began to peel away. Unconfirmed reports of a deal circulated through the Middle East. Its opponents began to mobilise.

When Mr. Rabin's cabinet met on Aug. 30 to officially approve the plan, thousands of Israeli settlers and other right-wingers rallied outside, hurling eggs, stones and cries of betrayal.

"It's like a fist aimed at the heart of Israel," Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu said of PLO control to Gaza and Jericho.

Mr. Arafat's Palestinian rivals saw betrayal, too.

Fundamentalist spokesman Abdul Aziz Rantisi, warned that the deal "will not prevent the Islamic takeover... from fighting to restore its rights in Haifa, Acre, Lydda, and Ramat." — Arab cities long ago incorporated into Israel.

But Mr. Rabin told his people, "the time has come to take a chance for peace." And Mr. Arafat swiftly collected endorsements from King Hussein and Syria's Assad, then headed for a showdown with his divided Executive Committee at the PLO's Tunis headquarters villa.

Late on Sept. 9, after two days filled with angry words and

anguished silences, Mr. Arafat won bare majority approval for the declaration recognising Israel and renouncing violence.

Norway's host flew the statement to Jerusalem early the next morning, history in his hand, proof for Israeli eyes. Mr. Rabin's cabinet quickly endorsed its own terse statement recognising the PLO. Back in Tunis, Mr. Arafat's committee gave final approval to the overall plan.

In Israeli and Palestinian hearts, joy mixed with fear. Israel's stock market boomed. Someone ordered 40,000 Palestinian flags from an Israeli flag-maker. Gaza refugees hugged Israeli soldiers on patrol. But that dismal strip of camps remained deadly, too — on Sept. 12 Palestinian militants ambushed and killed three Israeli soldiers in Gaza.

The peace agreement's greatest promise, everyone knew, was for months and years more of contention, recrimination and blood. The contention continued even into the White House.

President Clinton, heir to the U.S. role of chief Middle East peace broker, invited the Palestinian and Israeli leaders to Washington for a ceremonial signing of documents on Monday, Sept. 13.

Up until just an hour before the 11 a.m. event on the south lawn of the White House, the Palestinians were arguing for a change in the peace plan text, to insert a reference to PLO. But at the moment of "history and hope" approached — as Mr. Clinton called it — they relented. It was time to take another step down the road. The world was waiting.

"Ladies and gentlemen," a loudspeaker voice announced, "Mr. Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation... The honourable Yitzhak Rabin, prime minister of Israel... The president of the United States..."

It is 1982 again. Ali Taha stands in the ruins of Beirut. The PLO guerrilla, 19 years old, is packed, awaiting the boat that means defeat. "So many friends have been killed," he says. "I cannot count them."

Around his neck, a pendant hangs, shaped like Palestine. Might be ever go home, reclaim his father's farm in Israel? "Inshallah," he says. God willing.

"If not me, then my children. Or my grandchildren."

For now, he says, "it's over, it's over."

But it has only just begun.

People in Taiwan assert their right to U.N. representation

TAIPEI — The Republic of China's participation in the United Nations is the common aspiration of the 21 million people living in the Taiwan area and will be the principal goal of its diplomatic endeavours over the next few years. Undeniably, the ROC exercises effective control over the Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu area and is capable of fulfilling its international obligations.

It also has the strong desire and sufficient resources to contribute to the international community, yet is still barred from the U.N. and many international conventions. Besides, it is not allowed to fully participate in such areas as international humanitarian aid and economic assistance projects.

This runs counter to the interests of the international community, the U.N. principle of universality of membership and its persistent pitch for basic human rights. The international community should take a hard look at this issue and arrive at a just and reasonable accommodation for ROC participation in the U.N.

Towards the end of World War II, the ROC, together with the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the former Soviet Union, had the idea of the United Nations and participated in the drafting of its Charter. The ROC therefore became a founder of the organisation and a permanent member of its Security Council in 1945.

In 1949, as the consequence of civil war, China was divided. Since then the ROC government, seated on Taiwan and the mainland Chinese authorities have coexisted on their respective sides of the Taiwan Straits. It took the United Nations 22 years (from 1950 to 1971) to handle the question of how to seat the two adversary political entities of China, since both possessed certain territories, people, and political powers. Finally, on October 25, 1971, the United Nations adopted Resolution 2758 (XXVI) at the 26th regular session of its General Assembly. The resolution determined that China's seat in the U.N. should be occupied by the mainland Chinese regime. This compelled the ROC to withdraw from the U.N. and its subsidiary organs. ROC membership in twelve U.N. specialised agencies was also lost during the subsequent decade.

This has limited the ROC official diplomatic operations. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the ROC has maintained a continuing and even growing presence in the international community. It is apparent that the U.N. did not completely resolve the issue resulting from China's division. The United Nations just over-simplified the issue of China's representation in its 1971 resolution for expediency against its principle.

It is quite plain that both the ROC and the mainland Chinese authorities have been exercising jurisdiction over separate territories of China since 1949. This situation is unique in the history of international politics. Conventional international law does not provide for any such scenario and contemporary international law lacks the appropriate rules for regulating affairs concerning the present divided condition of China. Hence, members of the international community have virtually no legal precedent by which to deal with the issue.

During the twenty odd years after its loss of U.N. membership, the ROC government has buried its head in national development. It is currently the 14th-largest trading nation in the world. Its GNP ranks 20th in the world. Its per capita GNP exceeds \$10,000, and its foreign exchange reserves top other nations. The ROC has become a major investor nation worldwide and provides technical assistance and development funding to many developing countries. Its full participation in the activities of international organisations would be beneficial to the world community.

The unification of China has always been a matter for the Chinese people to decide for themselves. It should be a process in which the political relationship between the two Chinese political entities peacefully evolves over time.

The ROC's participation in the United Nations would be conducive to the final unification of China. The precedent of simultaneous U.N. participation by former East and West Germany as well as by North and South Korea is sufficient proof that membership in the U.N. does not impede the unification of a nation, nor imply international endorsement for its permanent division.

The ROC has adopted the Guidelines for National Unification as the basis for its step-by-step improvement of relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits. The guidelines are consistent with the United Nations spirit of peaceful settlement of disputes.

Before unification, the ROC insists that it ought to have a reasonable international status. And under conditions that do not impede the eventual unification of China, the ROC ought to be allowed participation in the United Nations so that the interests of the 21 million people under ROC jurisdiction have appropriate and effective representation.

During the general debate of the 47th session of the U.N. General Assembly held in New York in mid-September 1992, representatives of nine U.N. member nations supported ROC participation in the organisation. They stressed the principle of universality of U.N. membership, and called upon the international community to recognise the very existence of the Republic of China, its contributions and its political and economic achievements.

In February 1993, the ROC government set up a policy group in the cabinet and a task force in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to press ahead with the task of achieving ROC participation in the United Nations.

The ROC government hopes that the issue will receive widespread international attention and serious consideration within the next three years. The ROC government and its 21 million people living on Taiwan appeal to every country in the world to reexamine the abnormality and correct the injustice.

Total pullout will be achieved — Arafat

(Continued from page 1)

National Council. "We set out in our talks with the Israeli side from the basis of joint Arab work. There was a need to try and reach agreement away from the spotlight to break the stagnation and unblock the road."

"You all know that in 22 months there was no progress on the Palestinian-Israeli track at a time when Israel was escalating its oppression and iron-fist policies. Gaza had reached the point of famine," Mr. Arafat said.

He thanked many Arab leaders by name — among them King Hussein, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and Hafez Al Assad of Syria — for understanding that the agreement signed was just a temporary phase.

"There can be no final settlement without a solution on all the Arab tracks," Mr. Arafat said.

The PLO chief reiterated that a "confederation" with Jordan was his eventual objective and said the PLO-Israel accord was a step towards a global peace deal between Israel and Syria, Lebanon

and Jordan. A final settlement would have to be linked to the issues of Israeli retreat from all occupied land and resolving all "outstanding problems," namely the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlers in the occupied territories and borders with Israel, he reaffirmed.

Arafat said the Arab World was at an "historic turning point" illustrated by the "first official recognition by Israel of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and of the PLO as their legitimate representative."

The PLO leader, who has come in for some criticism for failing to consult Arab leaders before holding secret talks with Israel, vowed to coordinate peace moves with "our brothers in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan."

Mr. Arafat also addressed the thousands of activists in the Palestinian uprising, a vital constituency he must win over. Fundamentalist activists have said they will press on with the fight against Israel.

"To all the child prisoners in the prisons of occupation, to our heroic injured, the martyrs and

their mothers, to detainees and deportees, to every grown man and woman and the children of the rocks, I give my best greetings and love and respect."

"We look to the future with all hope and self-confidence, relying on (their) abilities and competence which will contribute with us to building peace, in the land of peace, the land of blessed Palestine," he said.

Esmat Abdul Meguid, the Arab League's secretary-general, welcomed the accord, which he too described as a step towards comprehensive regional peace. And in view of that, he said, it's time for the Arabs to make peace with each other.

"We know that peace is a historic opportunity... but it also presents many challenges that we should face on the basis of Arab solidarity," Dr. Abdul Meguid, a former Egyptian foreign minister, said.

"We now see the beginning of an Arab-Israeli reconciliation which makes us wonder: Isn't it time for an Arab-Arab reconciliation?"

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Risky loans mean World Bank must boost reserves

WASHINGTON (R) — The World Bank said Sunday it expects a moderate increase in lending in 1994 to between \$24 billion and \$27 billion, but riskier loans are requiring it to strengthen its financial safety net.

Upheaval in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, where new lending is concentrated, is causing problems as some countries that are converting to market economies have trouble servicing their debts.

To handle this new risk, the bank said in its annual report that it plans over the next two years to set aside more money to protect it against losses from bad loans.

It is increasing its ratio of total reserves to loans, which acts as an overall cushion against unexpected losses, to 13 or 14 per cent from its fiscal 1993 level of 12.8 per cent.

A bank official called this a conservative measure taken to protect bank safety, not a sign of problems.

"We are realistic. We are going into uncharted territory and anything could happen," she said.

Loan demand from the former communist states helped swell bank lending last fiscal year (July 1992 to June 1993) to a record

\$23.7 billion, up from \$21.7 billion in fiscal 1992.

Demand will continue to grow this fiscal year, again led by the eastern European and former Soviet states, bank officials said at a news briefing.

Already the bank faces a rising number of problem loans from the former Yugoslav republics, several of which are engulfed in civil war.

A halt in their debt repayments in fiscal 1993 required it to increase its provisions against loan losses to 3.0 per cent of total loans from 2.5 per cent in fiscal 1992 ended June 30.

This set-aside to protect it against possible losses, coupled with a drop in investment earnings as interest rates fell, caused bank net income to fall to \$1.3 billion last year from \$1.6 billion in fiscal 1991, the bank said.

Total bank loans commitments last fiscal year were \$16.9 billion for 122 projects, up from \$15.2 billion for 122 projects a year earlier.

Credits through the bank's International Development Agency to the poorest countries totalled \$6.8 billion in fiscal 1993 for 123 projects, up from \$6.6 billion for 110 projects in 1992.

Agriculture and rural development, followed by transportation, was the largest loan share, the bank said.

In another sign of rising demand for bank services as emerging nations join the agency, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) is about to hit the limit on the amount of private loans to developing countries it can guarantee.

MIGA said it guaranteed 27 contracts worth \$374 million in fiscal 1993, up 19.5 per cent from the \$313 million guaranteed a year earlier and bringing its total contingent liabilities to \$850 million.

"If we continue to grow at the present speed, we will meet our capacity limit of \$1.5 billion within this fiscal year," a MIGA official said at a news briefing.

He said MIGA this autumn will propose raising its leverage ratio, currently set at 1.5 per cent of unimpaired capital. The top limit under MIGA statutes is 5.0 per cent.

The agency stimulates foreign private investment in developing countries by insuring investors against foreign currency exchange risk, war and state seizure.

U.S. to propose overhaul of foreign aid programmes

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States is to propose a comprehensive review of its criteria for allocating foreign aid programmes, a senior administration official said in an interview published Sunday.

In particular the administration is to propose to Congress a system basing aid decisions on five factors, including the global environment, as well as demographic and economic factors.

"We're going to be a lot more tough in making decisions about whether a country is a good development partner for the United States," said Brian Atwood, director of the agency for international development aid.

The new system would be based "on a new approach that addresses five specific concerns: The global environment, population growth, economic development, democracy building and humanitarian assistance," he said, in an interview with the Washington Post.

Mr. Atwood said the proposed revisions would not reduce aid to Israel or Egypt, the two countries that benefit most from U.S. aid. He said aid to countries sym-

pathetic to the Middle East peace process could increase in the wake of the recent historic PLO-Israeli peace accord.

The comments came after a high-level report released Friday, saying that U.S. foreign aid is often wasted or inconsistent with administration goals, and recommending the elimination of country-by-country funding.

"Funds would not be given to countries on an entitlement basis, but rather to requirements on a merit basis," according to a report to President Bill Clinton's cabinet written by senior officials and sub-cabinet level officials.

Currently most foreign aid funds are allotted by country, with Israel, Egypt and Turkey receiving the lion's share.

Foreign aid totalled \$27.7 billion for the 1993 budget year, which ends Oct. 1. That equals less than two per cent of the total federal budget.

The proposal could also remove U.S. government agencies as the primary aid delivery mechanism, allowing officials to contract out programmes to international aid organisations or whichever group they feel can

most efficiently fulfill the Clinton administration's goals.

About 75 per cent of foreign aid is currently spent on U.S.-produced food and equipment or salaries for aid workers.

Another proposed change, which has long been sought, would allow the State Department to decide how foreign aid funds are spent, reversing a trend of growing congressional earmarking of funds.

Earmarking made it difficult for the United States to come up with money to help the Soviet Union when it desperately needed aid during its dissolution.

"With the disappearance of communism in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, the bedrock support for foreign assistance has eroded significantly. There is no clear vision guiding the shape of our foreign assistance agenda for a world without the USSR."

Mr. Atwood sent a memo to employees Friday expressing support for reform. He wrote: "I am sure that some aspects of the present system are worth preserving, but they have thus far escaped me."

Gulf states need high oil quotas for Mideast peace

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Gulf Arab states may now rely on a new argument in a campaign to persuade fellow members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to maintain high output quotas: Financial commitments to Middle East peace.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have been under pressure from Iran and other hawks in the 12-nation OPEC to reduce output to prop up sagging oil prices.

But they have argued they are in need of funds to stimulate their economies, which have been jolted by a sharp decline in oil prices over the past decade and large contributions to two wars in the Gulf.

"They could come up with a good excuse this time: 'Their financial obligations for peace in the Middle East,'" a Gulf-based Arab diplomat said. "Some might argue they could meet such obligations from their current oil earnings or overseas assets. But such earnings cannot meet even domestic spending and overseas funds have sharply eroded."

Iran, regarded as a price hawk within OPEC, has blamed the three Gulf oil heavyweights for a slump in prices this year. Iran has boosted its own output by more than 300,000 barrels per day (b/d) above its OPEC quota to put pressure on them to limit production.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude exporter, produces eight million b/d, nearly one-third of OPEC's output. But Iran has demanded that it return to its pre-Gulf war level of around five million b/d and has at the same time rejected any quota increase for Kuwait.

Both Gulf Arab states are suffering financial crises caused by falling oil revenue and the payment of more than \$35 billion to a U.S.-dominated international coalition that drove Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991.

They also provided Iraq nearly \$35 billion during its 1980-1988 war with Iraq, while some \$25 billion have been made available to Syria, Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The contributions and a persistent budget deficit have forced Saudi Arabia to withdraw most of its overseas assets, estimated at

\$120 billion. In Kuwait, officials acknowledge they have had to sell more than half of their investments abroad of \$100 billion to finance the war and reconstruction.

Such burdens have also held up a proposed \$10 billion Gulf fund to finance development in the Middle East.

"There is no doubt any increase in their oil revenues will enable Gulf states to play a stronger role in financing peace in the Middle East. This depends on how much they produce and whether oil prices will improve in future," said another diplomat, who is close to Gulf oil circles.

Although they have not announced specific contributions, Gulf Cooperation Council states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain — will likely join proposed international aid packages for the Palestinians when they assume responsibility for economic affairs in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, as stipulated in a self-rule agreement signed with Israel Monday.

IMF official: World economic growth to improve in 1994

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The global economic crisis has hit bottom and the outlook for growth in 1994 is better than in 1993, according to a senior International Monetary Fund (IMF) official.

The crisis has bottomed out, later than we had expected (but we are) not far away from an upswing," the official said.

For 1993, world economic growth will hit 2.2 per cent. The developing world's 6.1 per cent rate will counterbalance the industrialised countries' weak 1.1 per cent growth, and the nearly 10 per cent drop in production in the former Soviet Union, the official said.

The official added that the budget plan adopted by the United States is going a "long way, in the right direction."

He said he hoped the trend in Germany toward lowering interest rates continues as the market expects.

He also hailed the Japanese economic stimulus package and its focus on structural reform, but said, "further action could be needed... Japan needs a strong cocktail with a little bit of fiscal policy, a little bit of monetary policy."

Action on interest rates, the official said, could help to slow the yen's appreciation and accelerate the recovery of financial institutions and contribute to a climate of confidence.

But the official warned that industrialised countries had to "make sure we go out of the crisis on sounder conditions, better equipped with more room to

manoeuvre." Though inflation is at its lowest rate in 30 years, the official underscored the need to watch out for a resurgence of inflation. He cited the case of the United States, where authorities are ready to tighten its monetary policy if necessary.

The official said he was "impressed by the way in which markets and authorities have moved" after the recent crisis in the European Monetary System (EMS). Cautiously and in a cooperative spirit.

The official, speaking privately, said it was encouraging to see the EMS out such an "extremely severe test."

It was, the official added, "unavoidable, but regrettable that Europe let itself be put in such a corner. The relaxation of discipline (by widening the acceptable bands for member-currency fluctuations) is dangerous for the system and not a positive thing for the world economy."

But that is only a "temporary remedy" and there is a "need for resuming these efforts to increase convergence and monetary cooperation," the official said.

The "EMS is a crisis child, it has survived many," the official added, but noted that this was a time for realism. He said the process of European financial integration "should, could continue."

The fund official rejected the idea of a return to exchange or capital controls. He said it was crucial to "make sure markets are true markets, transparent," and with "prudent rules."

U.N. agency says recession fooled big forecasters

GENEVA (AP) — Most major economic forecasters failed to predict the depth and length of the current world recession, the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has said.

UNCTAD said it, too, was "largely off the mark" and that it was giving up including its own forecasts in its yearly review of the world economy, the 1993 trade and development report.

"The North has failed to recover," said Kenneth Daddie of Ghana, the secretary-general of UNCTAD in an introduction to the report. "Commodity prices are falling yet again, intensifying poverty in the South, and the unemployed are multiplying, intensifying poverty in the North."

He said "a bold and innovative" response is needed from the leading industrialised countries to turn the world economy around but that it has not been forthcoming because they "are seeking solutions to the legacies of the 1980s in the motto of that decade: 'Leave it to the markets.'"

This motto is being followed even though in the bright spot in the world economy, east and south Asia, governments follow a policy counter to the hands-off approach, Mr. Daddie said.

"In all the fastest-growing countries of the region governments have given strong support to private business and to exports," he said.

The 221-page UNCTAD report included an article on poor forecasting, which makes it more difficult for policy makers to act appropriately.

The recession in major industrial countries since 1990 was generally not foreseen by most

national or international forecasters," the article said. "Once the downturn could no longer be doubted, its scale and duration were poorly forecast."

Two of the most prestigious forecasters, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicted that the economies of the industrialised countries would grow by 2.9 per cent in 1991. A year later — in 1990 — OECD revised the prediction to two per cent.

The correct figure turned out to be 0.7 per cent. The IMF was still holding to a prediction of 2.9 per cent as of April 1990, just as UNCTAD was doing in mid-1990, the report said. It said the errors were similar in predicting 1992. A year earlier the forecasters were predicting growth of 2.2 to 2.8 per cent, but the actual result for the year was 1.4 per cent.

"If the record of forecasting is to be improved, it will require not only technical advances in modeling and learning from previous mistakes, but also the 'experienced intuition' that is the privilege of only a relatively small number of experts."

If changes are novel, the forecasts will be especially uncertain, because the economists have to "make an unusually important act of judgement" in guessing at how to modify their forecasting models.

Vietnam seeks investment rather than aid

HANOI (R) — Vietnam said Sunday it aimed to attract \$13 to \$14 billion in foreign investment by the turn of the century, confirming it wanted private capital rather than aid to be the driving force for growth.

Dau Ngoc Xuan, chairman of the State Committee for Cooperation and Investment (SCCI), said foreign-invested capital would be used to improve infrastructure, create new factories and increase export earnings and

budget revenues.

"Our objective is to attract \$13 to \$14 billion of foreign investment by the year 2000," the official Vietnam News Agency quoted him as telling local reporters.

Vietnam, which started adapting its communist economy to market principles in the late 1980s, has said it is looking for \$20 to \$25 billion in total foreign funding — matched by an equal amount of local capital — to

achieve annual economic growth of at least 7.5 per cent until 2000.

Mr. Xuan's remarks, the first from a cabinet-level official giving figures of foreign investment needed, appeared to indicate that Hanoi would be seeking at least \$7 billion — more than \$1 billion a year — from aid donors by 2000.

Governments and international agencies are due to hold a conference in Paris in November to discuss aid pledges for Vietnam's development plan.

By that time, Vietnam is expected to have reached a structural adjustment agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which will qualify it to start receiving fresh concessional help from the IMF, World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

Mr. Xuan, the government's chief foreign investment watchdog, said that since December 1987, the SCCI had granted licences for 750 projects with total

capital of \$6.5 billion.

Of these, projects worth \$1.5 billion had become operational so far, he said, acknowledging that implementation of the foreign investment law was hampered by the absence of laws on labour, commerce, bankruptcy and real estate.

An SCCI report earlier this month listed Taiwan, Hong Kong, Australia, France and South Korea as the top five investors in terms of capital pledged.

Foreign firms step up investment in India

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Foreign investment in India has jumped in the first seven months of the current year to \$1.6 billion from a total investment of \$1.2 billion in 1992, a government report has said.

The report said India's growing popularity reflected its "appreciation as a sound business destination" and added that the United States was the leading investor, with \$863 million between January and July.

The increase in investment follows a series of market reforms launched in June 1991. Finance

Minister Manmohan Singh, the architect of the reforms, has ushered in sweeping changes ending four decades of quasi-socialistic market curbs and introduced a free-floating rupee to boost trade.

Foreign projects worth \$2.4 billion were cleared between August 1991 and July 1992 against \$650 million a year earlier, the report said, a nearly four-fold rise.

The United States invested \$61.9 million in India in 1991 and \$416 million in 1992, it said.

Opponents step up war of rhetorics

(Continued from page 1)

He argued that it would "recognise the usurper regime, trigger civil war among Palestinians, suppress Islamic movements, legitimise Zionist crimes and stabilise Tel Aviv's sovereignty over the occupied territories," according to Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency.

The agency, monitored in Nicosia, also said there was a "massive turnout" at a rally in the holy city of Qum against the accord. It gave no figures, but said that participants included

clergymen and seminary students.

The speaker at the Qum rally, Ayatollah Fazel Lankarani, described Mr. Arafat as "a hypocrite, a puppet of world arrogance."

The British Broadcasting Corporation in London quoted Iranian Television as saying that in another rally, students marched to the Palestinian mission in Tehran and burned an Israeli flag. They also issued a statement condemning any compromise with Israel and the United States, it said.

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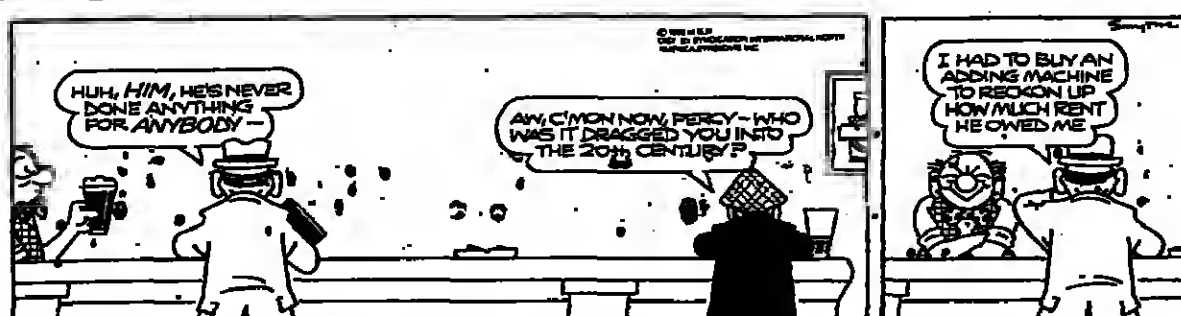


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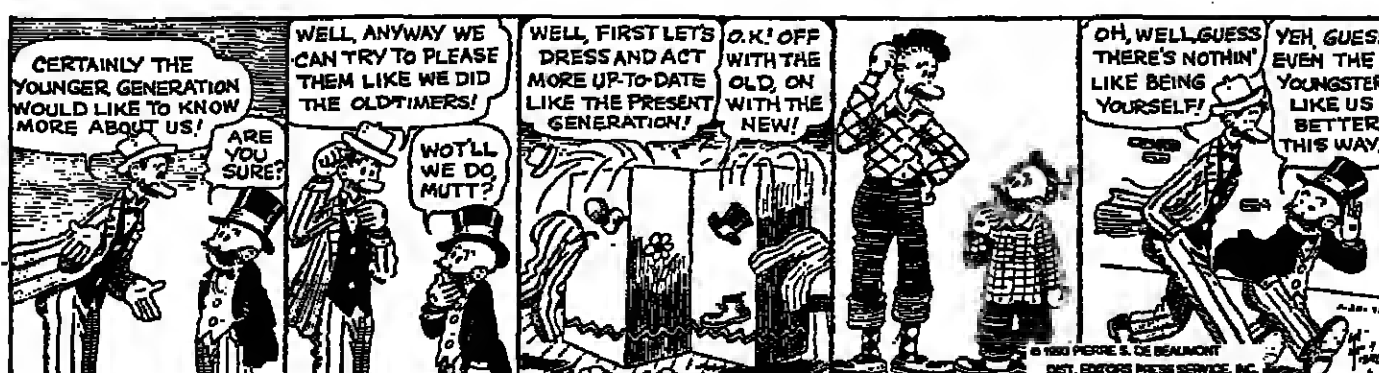
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Andy Capp



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- ACROSS
- 1 Musical family name
 - 5 Lesson
 - 10 Weather musical
 - 14 Reverend
 - 15 Archangel
 - 16 Daily case item
 - 17 So be it
 - 18 US president
 - 20 Step up the motor
 - 21 Working
 - 22 Acting acronym
 - 23 Leaven
 - 25 — and hounds
 - 27 Stress
 - 29 Maine
 - 33 Wild goats
 - 34 Carnivorous
 - 35 Indian
 - 36 Salver
 - 37 Conspicuous
 - 38 Kin of a fowl
 - 39 Reply: abbr.
 - 40 — Alghieri
 - 41 Reef
 - 42 Votes into office again
 - 44 "Kiss the butt"
 - 45 Salsanaders
 - 46 Woodland deity
 - 47 Euro
 - 50 Glet
 - 51 Foot
 - 54 Irish satirist
 - 57 Cut it out!
 - 58 Stain
 - 59 Coral reef
 - 60 French river
 - 61 Auld lang
 - 62 Gives up
 - 63 Barge
- DOWN
- 1 Tolerate
 - 2 Summit
 - 3 Come actor
 - 4 Term of respect
 - 5 Majestic
 - 6 French seaport
 - 7 Well-ventilated
 - 8 Boston — Parry
 - 9 Wing
 - 10 Morning beverage
 - 11 Much
 - 12 Land: abbr.
 - 13 Soft drink
 - 15 Menus
 - 21 Excludes
 - 24 Spectral
 - 25 Seasonal
 - 26 Like a goddess
 - 27 Flower essence
 - 28 Civil con
 - 29 Fender
 - 30 Like a despot
 - 31 Ermine
 - 32 River ducks
 - 34 Indirect suggestions
 - 37 Actuality
 - 38 "Wonderful one-liner"
 - 39 (Holmes)
 - 40 Put off
 - 41 Adam's son
 - 43 Ambassador
 - 44 Badgerlike animal
 - 48 Move, in a way
 - 47 Foreman
 - 48 Direct
 - 49 Image
 - 50 Trudge
 - 52 Madding
 - 53 Enc
 - 55 Serviceman
 - 56 Name, full
 - 57 Call for help

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COUNTRY'S NAME	TRADED VOLUME	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	PRICE
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	144,888	188.500	185.000	187.250
JORDAN POSTAL BANK	21,492	5.200	5.200	5.200
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	12,704	2.100	2.090	2.110
THE HOUSING BANK	26,615	1.320	1.320	1.320
JORDAN SAVING BANK	99,290	1.280	1.250	1.270
JORDAN SAVING BANK	18,293	6.070	6.070	6.070
JORDAN SAVING BANK	7,050	4.710	4.700	4.700
JORDAN SAVING BANK	1,645	4.750	4.700	4.700
JORDAN SAVING BANK	143,173	1.500	1.480	1.490
JORDAN SAVING BANK	1,080	4.250	4.250	4.250
JORDAN SAVING BANK	89,849	2.770	2.750	2.770
JORDAN SAVING BANK	141,139	2.530	2.530	2.490
JORDAN SAVING BANK	12,200	5.200	5.050	5.050
JORDAN SAVING BANK	26,748	0.640	0.620	0.640
JORDAN SAVING BANK	4,338	1.700	1.700	1.700
JORDAN SAVING BANK	3,540	4.300	4.300	4.300
JORDAN SAVING BANK	6,370	0.950	0.950	0.950
JORDAN SAVING BANK	2,620	19.750	20.300	20.300
JORDAN SAVING BANK	2,452	2.150	2.150	2.150
JORDAN SAVING BANK	27,452	2.320	2.320	2.340
JORDAN SAVING BANK	1,550	1.700	1.700	1.700
JORDAN SAVING BANK	514,429	2.110	2.110	2.090
JORDAN SAVING BANK	19,792	10.700	10.500	10.500
JORDAN SAVING BANK	48,584	7.650	7.510	7.510
JORDAN SAVING BANK	5,240	11.750	12.700	11.600
JORDAN SAVING BANK	12,440	2.500	2.500	2.500
JORDAN SAVING BANK	4,420	7.500	7.400	7.400
JORDAN SAVING BANK	1,078	0.900	0.890	0.890
JORDAN SAVING BANK	1,214	3.950	3.900	3.920
JORDAN SAVING BANK	11,840	7.700	7.700	7.700
JORDAN SAVING BANK	1,078	0.900	0.890	0.890
JORDAN SAVING BANK	44,340	17.500	17.000	17.000
JORDAN SAVING BANK	1,112	10.700	10.500	10.500
JORDAN SAVING BANK	58,230	10.700	9.800	10.100
JORDAN SAVING BANK	4,538	1.700	1.700	1.700
JORDAN SAVING BANK	967	0.350	0.340	0.340
JORDAN SAVING BANK	2,560	1.700	1.700	1.700
JORDAN SAVING BANK	4,420	7.000	7.000	7.000
JORDAN SAVING BANK	3,200	0.400	0.400	0.400
JORDAN SAVING BANK	214,170	6.550	6.400	6.300
JORDAN SAVING BANK	3,200	1.500	1.500	1.500
JORDAN SAVING BANK	3,200	1.500	1.500	1.500
JORDAN SAVING BANK	50,442	5.520	5.520	5.520
GRAND TOTAL				1,962,855

Kuwait insists on OPEC oil quota rise

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait, in determined mood ahead of a crunch OPEC meeting, Sunday reaffirmed a demand that the producer group approve a 30 per cent increase in its official oil output quota in the fourth quarter.

Oil Minister Ali Ahmad Al Baghli also advocated a rise in OPEC's overall production ceiling in the fourth quarter to between 24.5 million to 24.7 million barrels per day (b/d) from 23.6 million, the official Kuwait News Agency reported.

"We hope an agreement will be reached regarding Kuwait's quota in the next OPEC meeting according to our just demands, which are known by OPEC," Sheikh Baghli was quoted as saying.

Sheikh Baghli, who has long sought an output ceiling of about 2.16 million b/d, said he would stick by his "just demand" at the Sept. 25 Geneva OPEC talks.

Oil prices, languishing at three-year lows, stood slightly firmer as the trading week ended Friday. But traders said their recent retreat might resume if the meeting failed to set quotas the October to December period that would put a lid on excess supply.

Kuwait opted out of the OPEC third quarter agreement, which put the emirate's output at 1.6 million b/d. Sheikh Baghli suggested Kuwait had already carried out a plan to raise output to 2.16 million b/d sometime this month from 2.0 million in August.

Jordan-Kuwait Bank and Bank of Jordan dismiss reports of 'merger'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Two Jordanian banks Sunday denied a report that they were discussing a merger and cited their moves to increase their respective capitals as the best evidence that they planned to continue as independent entities.

"I can categorically say that we did not discuss and are not discussing any merger," said Sufian Sartawi, director-general of the Jordan-Kuwait Bank, referring to a report in the local press that the bank was involved in discussions with the Bank of Jordan.

A senior official at the Bank of Jordan also denied the report, carried by the tabloid Shihani. "We are not aware of any discussions that we are supposed to be having with Jordan-Kuwait," said the official, who preferred anonymity.

"We hope the process will be complete before December."

"If there are any mergers under discussions, why should we consider any increase in capital now?" he asked.

The capital increase comes in line with a Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) directive prompted by recommendations from the Geneva-based Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

All banks in Jordan and elsewhere in the region, including the Gulf states, are increasing their capitals following the recommendation by the BIS, a key watchdog of international banking.

The present capital of the Bank of Jordan is JD5.25 million. Its JD1 par-value shares are traded at slightly less than JD5 at the Amman Financial Market.

"We are implementing the capital increase now," said the Bank of Jordan official without giving details.

Mr. Sartawi said his bank was awaiting approval from the Ministry of Industry and Trade to set a new price for the shares based on the current market value, the bank's assets and profitability.

Mr. Sartawi said the capital structure of the bank remains unchanged and that Kuwaitis continued to own 25 per cent of the bank's capital as the case was when it was established in the 80s.

"The Gulf crisis has not changed anything," he said, noting that the bank always remained a strictly Jordanian bank governed by the laws and regulations set by the Central Bank of Jordan regardless of the part ownership by Kuwaitis.

Rumours that the Bank of Jordan and Jordan-Kuwait Bank were planning a merger or that the Bank of Jordan was planning to "take over" Jordan-Kuwait Bank appeared to have sparked by a belief that a prominent member of the board of directors of the Jordan-Kuwait Bank was representing the funds of the Bank of Jordan.

The individual was not immediately available for comment, but banking circles agreed largely with this interpretation.

While there could be a conflict of interest which will be very difficult to establish even if the rumours were accurate, there is no banking law which prevents an investor from owning shares in two banks — at least that is what it will amount if it is proved that any individual in the Bank of Jordan is acting through a proxy in the board of directors of the Jordan-Kuwait Bank, legal experts pointed out.

"It is a question of free enterprise," said an expert in banking laws. "As long as one does not use his privileged position in the decision-making body of a share-holding entity to reap illegal personal benefits, or use privileged information to benefit another commercial entity or to undermine the interests of the concerned company, there is no violation of the law."

Even at that, said the expert, "the drawing line between free-enterprise ownership of shares and board memberships is so thin that it is very difficult to define where there is a conflict of interest."

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
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Foreign Exchange Market Summary (September 13-September 17, 1993)

AMMAN — The U.S. dollar moved higher against European currencies, as it ended last week 1.05 per cent higher against the mark and 1.31 per cent higher against sterling, while it moved 1.49 per cent lower against the yen.

The dollar appreciated against the mark Monday, as dealers liquidated their long mark positions built-up on previous safe-haven considerations during the turmoil witnessed by ERM currencies last month. But increasing concerns, ahead of Tuesday's release of August CPI and retail sales figures in the U.S., limited the dollar's rise. The dollar also appreciated to 106.80 yen during trading hours, but failure to break through this level caused the dollar to retreat on profit-taking.

The dollar's retreat against the yen was also attributed to concern over the consequences of the restructuring of \$500 million of Brazilian debt to Japanese banks. The yen denominated debt was to be converted to U.S. dollar bonds the next day, and market participants feared that short dollar positions might be taken by the Japanese banks to hedge the new U.S. currency exposure. The dollar, thus ended at 106.25 yen.

The dollar was slightly higher against the mark and sterling Tuesday, but moved lower against the yen compared to the previous day. Stronger than expected U.S. economic numbers released that day, caused the dollar to move higher against the mark during trading hours. U.S. August CPI was reported to have increased by 0.3 per cent, while U.S. retail sales rose by 0.2 per cent over the same period. But failure to break through the 1.6160, coupled with unconfirmed rumours of dollar selling against marks by European central banks, caused the dollar to fall back to 1.6098 marks at the New York close.

Analysts also indicated that stronger-than-expected rise in the CPI offset the previous week's report of a 0.6 per cent drop in the PPI, but they doubted the possibility of a Fed tightening in the short run as a result of these figures.

The dollar retreated against European currencies Wednesday. Reports indicated that the announcement of prime rate cuts by two major U.S. banks, prompted dollar selling. Others also indicated that continued selling of dollars for marks by European Central banks contributed to the dollar's decline. But short covering and profit-taking on the mark/yen, caused the dollar to rebound and close at 1.5967 marks later in the day.

On the other hand, optimism about Japan's fiscal plan, to be announced the next day, caused the dollar to move slightly higher against the yen. The plan was expected to boost Japanese domestic demand and thereby reduce Japanese export and increase imports.

The Japanese government disappointed most market participants Thursday, when it announced its new 6.15 trillion yen (approx. \$58.57 billion) stimulus package, causing the yen to move higher against the dollar. Analysts commented that traders were skeptical of the Japanese package because it lacked the cuts in taxes and interest rates they had hoped for, and was expected to add no more than 0.4 per cent in GDP growth. Others indicated that U.S. officials' disappointment with the plan could prompt them to resume their demands for a higher yen as an alternative way of reducing the mounting U.S. trade deficit with Japan. The dollar, thus ended at 104.23, its lowest for the week. The dollar rose against the mark, however, in response to a sell-off of the mark on profit-taking.

While trading was light and choppy Friday and many traders were absent on holiday in New York, the dollar rallied to finish at its highest closing levels of the week against the mark. The dollar also moved slightly higher against the yen, despite U.S. dissatisfaction of Japan's economic plan, as observers did not rule out the possibility of further measures by the Japanese government, after the Japanese prime minister meets with President Clinton this week. In addition the dollar benefited from reports that the Bank of Japan may cut the 2.5 per cent discount rate by 0.5 per cent. In the meantime, the University of Michigan Consumer Confidence Index showed by tiny rise to 77.4 per cent in September, from 77.3 per cent in August.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	10/9/93	17/9/93	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.5518	1.5315	(1.31)%
Deutsche Mark	1.5978	1.6140	(1.05)%
Swiss Franc	1.3415	1.4043	(0.91)%
French Franc	5.5968	5.6265	(0.53)%

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
 Date: 19/9/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6880	0.6900
Sterling Pound	1.0540	1.0593
Deutsche Mark	0.4257	0.4278
Swiss Franc	0.4892	0.4916
French Franc	0.1222	0.1228
Japanese Yen	0.6580	0.6613
Dutch Guilder	0.3792	0.3811
Swedish Krona	0.0439	0.0441
Italian Lira	0.0439	0.0441
Belgian Franc	0.0439	0.0441

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Shevardnadze appeals for world help against Abkhazian rebels

SUKHUMI, Georgia (R) — Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze appealed to the West for help Sunday in stopping an advance by Abkhazian rebels who pounded the outskirts of the regional capital Sukhumi and dug in near the airport.

Mr. Shevardnadze, who as Soviet foreign minister played a leading role under Mikhail Gorbachev in ending the cold war, suggested the West had a debt it could now repay.

"Aspiring to end the cold war I fought for the freedom and independence of all peoples. Little did I know then that after the major threat confronting mankind was removed, pitch dark clouds would descend upon my homeland."

"The world cannot go on leading a serene comfortable life while death threatens a nation, even if it happens to be the smallest one," said Mr. Shevardnadze, who flew to Sukhumi after Abkhazian rebels flouted a Russian-brokered peace agreement and attacked Sukhumi last week.

Mr. Shevardnadze said he had faith in the sincerity of President Boris Yeltsin but believed nationalist forces in Russia were instrumental in undermining Georgia.

"Boris Nikolayevich (Yeltsin). Don't you think the time has come now to speak out for Georgia?"

"Abkhazia is an arena of the empire's bloody revenge," he said in an emotional appeal broadcast on Georgian radio.

Georgia has repeatedly accused Russian troops of helping the Abkhaz rebels, but the high command insists it is neutral.

"I want the world to understand that Abkhazia is a fuse which could detonate not only the Georgia of Shevardnadze but the Russia of Yeltsin," Mr. Shevardnadze said in a statement.

Abkhazian forces pounded the suburbs of Sukhumi from the early hours of Sunday morning, and rebel troops took up position only three kilometres from the city's airport.

Blasts from devastating Grad rockets echoed through a city darkened by a power embargo imposed by Russia. In the early morning Sukhumi residents chopped down trees for fuel in fear of the second advancing enemy, winter.

Sukhumi is the capital of Abkhazia but has remained in Georgian government hands since the conflict began in August, 1992.

Rival Georgian militias, temporarily putting aside their differences, headed for the city after Mr. Shevardnadze warned that it was on the point of falling to the rebels.

The fighting shattered a July 28 peace deal, brokered by Russia, to which Mr. Shevardnadze nailed his personal authority and rammed through against the wishes of his parliament.

"I appeal to all men with guns to go to defend Sukhumi," he said in a television interview from the beleaguered city.

Militias loyal to ousted President Zviad Gamsakhurdia promptly joined forces in the defence of Sukhumi with their erstwhile enemies, the unruly Mkhedrioni militia of warlord Jaba Ioseliani, nominally loyal to Mr. Shevardnadze.

Mr. Ioseliani was a leader of a military coalition that besieged Mr. Gamsakhurdia in his parliament building in Tbilisi and eventually forced him to flee in January 1992.

About 2,000 civilian volunteers flew to Sukhumi from the capital Tbilisi, local news agencies said. Thousands of refugees scrambled for flights out on the planes which brought them in.

Soldiers drove round the airfield in armoured personnel carriers, firing in the air to disperse the desperate crowds. The airport road was thronged with people trying to escape.

Between 10,000 and 15,000 refugees returned to Sukhumi after the July truce. Now, terrified by the air raid sirens wailing through the city, many felt betrayed.

"What do they want from us?" mourned 34-year-old Zhanina Paichadze, surrounded by three young children. "We believed last time that there would be peace. We have been deceived again."

Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev said angrily in Moscow Saturday that Russia should impose sanctions on both Georgia and Abkhazia as neither side appeared ready to end the conflict.

He was especially critical of Mr. Shevardnadze, saying he rejected a proposal to meet Abkhazian leader Vladislav Ardzinba for peace talks.

Mr. Shevardnadze also turned down Gen. Grachev's offer to deploy about 5,000 Russian troops to separate the combatants.

Abkhaz leaders appealed to the Georgians in Sukhumi to surrender their arms, and said they would guarantee the safety of the city's civilian population.

Yeltsin proposes presidential elections to break deadlock

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin has proposed early presidential elections and restored a radical economic reform to power to revive his authority at home and in the West.

The weekend moves, designed to break political deadlock, brought a tough response from his hardline opponents.

Conservative parliamentary Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov accused the president of conducting a "creeping coup," while his estranged Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi urged restoration of a Soviet system.

Mr. Yeltsin calculates the offer of early presidential polls will ease approval of the parliamentary elections he sees as essential to end his power-struggle with the legislature.

He told a meeting of regional leaders the polls should be held six months after parliamentary elections. But aides have already told Mr. Yeltsin that his autumn deadline for elections to the legislature is unrealistic and a hostile parliament may defuse cooperation.

"I hope this can resolve the stalemate," Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai said. "It should create the critical mass that would enable an election ship to leave port."

The regional leaders had earlier refused Mr. Yeltsin's plan to create a new Federation Council, an assembly to unite representatives of Russia's 88 regions and, possibly, challenge the authority of parliament.

The rejection was a blow to Mr. Yeltsin who had promised to achieve two goals this autumn — the formal creation of the Federation Council and the conduct of parliamentary elections.

He now hopes the offer of presidential elections will be enough to persuade the top legislature, the Congress of People's Deputies, to change the constitution to allow polls.

Under the existing basic law parliamentary elections will not be held until 1995 and presidential elections until 1996.

But Mr. Yeltsin's signing of a

decree reappointing former Acting Premier Yegor Gaidar to his government will not enchant a Congress which had insisted on his removal only 10 months ago.

Mr. Yeltsin appointed Mr. Gaidar, who launched radical free-market reforms in January, 1992, as first deputy prime minister.

At the same time he moved conservative economics minister Oleg Lobov to head the presidential Security Council — a body coordinating domestic security policy, which has dwindled in influence in the last six months.

The overall result of the moves should be a strengthening of radical influence in a government riven by public disputes through the summer.

Mr. Lobov's espousal of more gradual reforms and greater emphasis on state controls in the transitional period had increased fears in the West and at home that Russia would overshoot its budgetary targets.

International Monetary Fund officials are concerned by Russian inflation, which ran around 30 per cent in August, and a parliamentary budget that would make a mockery of plans to cut the 1993 budgetary deficit to 10 per cent.

While keeping up political pressure in what Mr. Yeltsin had promised would be a "super-combative" September, the president is also very publicly attending to the security services whose support he needs.

Mr. Yeltsin visited an elite division of Interior Ministry troops outside Moscow last week and plans to meet a paratroop force at Nizhny Novgorod, east of the capital, this week.

A meeting of parliamentary deputies solicited the support of the security forces Saturday and said they should not support any actions violating the constitution.

Mr. Yeltsin has occasionally threatened to override.

"The motherland will condemn harshly those who fulfil anti-constitutional orders, who raise their hand against democratic bodies," a statement, issued by ITAR-

TASS News Agency, said. The president ended long uncertainty over the Ministry of Security by appointing a new head to replace Viktor Barannikov, sacked in July. Mr. Yeltsin's choice was Moscow security chief Nikolai Golushko.

Mr. Barannikov was sacked for what a presidential decree called "violating ethical norms and serious failures in his work."

Mr. Yeltsin also decreed Saturday that the rebel vice-president would no longer assume presidential responsibilities when the president travelled abroad.

The decree was the latest in a series of humiliations for Mr. Rutskoi, already suspended from his duties while a Yeltsin inquiry investigated corruption accusations.

Clashes in Chechnya
Several people were killed when rebels in Russia's breakaway region of Chechnya clashed with supporters of President Dzhokhar Dudayev, Interfax News Agency said Sunday.

Interfax said the clashes, in which several people were killed and wounded, broke out Saturday in Chechnya's Nadterechny district, a stronghold of anti-Dudayev opposition.

Interfax quoted an opposition leader as saying Gen. Dudayev provoked the conflict in an effort to stop volunteers leaving to fight for separatist rebels across the Caucasus Mountains in Georgia's Black Sea province of Abkhazia.

The Chechen opposition seized Nadterechny district in June after Dudayev, a former Soviet Air Force general who declared his north Caucasian republic independent of Russia in late 1991, drove it out of the regional capital Grozny.

The opposition has decided to send its fighters to support Abkhazian separatists, who are fighting to drive Georgian forces from their region.

Since June, Gen. Dudayev's supporters have made two attempts to seize back Nadterechny region, home to 46,000 people.

Stars congregate at Geena Davis wedding

SONOMA, California (R) — Limosines and minibuses shuttled guests to a northern California ranch where Oscar-winning actress Geena Davis and Finnish film director Renny Harlin were reportedly getting married.

Davis, who starred in *Thelma & Louise* and *A League of Their Own*, won a Supporting Actress Oscar for *The Accidental Tourist*. Harlin is the director of the current hit *Cliffhanger* as well as the sequels *Die Hard II* and *Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master*. News reports said the couple were getting married in a lavish ceremony at a 1,000-acre (404-hectare) ranch about 10 miles (16 km) north of Sonoma.

Movie stars Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell were spotted in the town. The San Francisco Chronicle reported the couple would exchange vows in the stone ruins of an old winery on the ranch. It said the wedding was part of a three-day celebration for about 200 guests that would cost \$700,000.

The Santa Rosa Press Democrat reported invitations had been sent to a list of stars, including Madonna and Bruce Willis. But the couple drew a tight veil of secrecy over the wedding, swearing all involved to confidentiality, press report said. No one would officially confirm the wedding was taking place.

Dead smoker wants wife to take up his habit
BUCHAREST (AP) — A husband who was heckled by his wife to stop smoking left everything to her on condition she take up his habit as punishment for 40 years of "hell," newspapers reported.

Marin Cemenescu, who died last week in his hometown of Timisoara at age 76, reportedly stipulated in his will that in order to inherit his house and \$30,000 estate, his 63-year-old wife Aneta would have to smoke five cigarettes a day for the rest of her life.

Mrs. Cemenescu's major transgression appears to have been waging war on his smoking, the Romania Libera daily reported. "She could not stand to see me with a cigarette in my mouth (and) I ended up smoking in the bathroom like a school-boy," Mr. Cemenescu reportedly wrote in his will. "My life was hell."

The report said Mrs. Cemenescu planned to contest the conditions of the will, and quoted her as saying, "I'd rather lose everything than touch a cigarette." The report did not specify the cause of Mr. Cemenescu's death.

Computers paid bills as woman lay dead for 3 years
STOCKHOLM (R) — The body of an elderly woman who died in 1990 lay undiscovered in her flat for more than three years while computers received her pension and automatically paid her bills, Swedish police said Saturday.

"It's very unusual for someone to be dead so long without anyone else reacting," a police duty officer in the Stockholm suburb of Farsta told the Swedish News Agency (TT). The woman's last opened post was dated May 11, 1990, police said, indicating she had died at the age of 72. Her name has not been made public.

Police were called to break into the flat by its landlord after he had made repeated efforts to gain the occupant's permission to renovate it.

Boy who committed 200-plus crimes is free again
BIRMINGHAM, England (AP) — A 13-year-old boy who has admitted to committing more than 200 crimes this year was freed by a court powerless to lock him up. Police told Birmingham magistrates that the teenager is a menace and should be incarcerated. They blame him for as much as a fifth of Birmingham's city centre crime, said his gang has netted £23,000 (\$35,650) in stolen goods. His mother said the boy, who cannot be identified because of his youth, is "just a cheeky rogue."

In his latest misdeed, the boy admitted stealing a golf bag, 13 clubs and a golfing glove from a car parked outside a hotel, at a time when prosecutors said he was obviously "extremely drunk." He was given a conditional discharge, and a 12-month supervision order already in place remained. The court refused to order compensation for the victim. The boy has been arrested more than a dozen times this year, and has admitted to more than 200 offenses including dishonesty, theft and car crimes.

"This youngster is very smart and knows what he is doing. He has weighed up the rewards of his crimes against the likely punishment," Police Chief superintendent John Jasper said. Under current legislation the maximum sentence for offenders aged 10 to 13 is a supervision order with a requirement such as a condition of residence.

U.K. Liberal Democrats seek to build on election successes

LONDON (R) — The minority Liberal Democrats, the perennial third force in British politics, set out this week to build on recent local election victories and convince voters they can be a party of power, not just protest.

Two crushing parliamentary by-election wins this year and dizzying gains in local council elections have established the Liberal Democrats as the main opposition in the south of England to the ruling Conservatives.

Yet with success comes increasing scrutiny, and the party's annual conference, which starts Monday in the southwestern seaside resort of Torquay, risks being overshadowed by row over its role in a local by-election in London last week.

The main opposition Labour Party charged that the Liberal Democrats pandered to racist feelings by issuing crude leaflets in the campaign for a council seat in the poor Tower Hamlets district of East London.

The poll, in a part of the capital with a large black and Asian population, was won by the ultra-right British National Party.

The Liberal Democrats' leader, former marine commando Paddy Ashdown, ordered an inquiry into the charges and promised that any party member who acted in a racist way would be expelled.

The incident is an embarrassing distraction for Mr. Ashdown, a smooth talker with rugged good looks, and the "Lib-Dems."

But it could also illustrate how the party is increasingly prepared to temper its high-minded principles with hard-nosed pragmatism in order to grab a slice of power.

The same mixture marked a major policy statement the party unveiled last week. It advertised its idealism by advocating environmental taxes, work-sharing and decentralised government.

Yet to fend off charges that it was misty-eyed over European integration, the party adopted a new stance of "constructive criticism" of Brussels.

The aim is to shake off the image of a well-meaning protest party and offer a serious political alternative.

In the past fed-up voters have flocked to the Lib-Dems in local polls and by-elections only to revert to the tried — if not trusted — Conservatives and Labour at general elections.

In the run-up to the April 1992 general election the Liberal Democrats scored three remarkable by-election victories but won only 18 per cent of the vote in the national poll.

Under Britain's first-past-the-post voting system this translated into just 20 parliamentary seats out of 651.

Since then the Liberal Democrats have overturned large Conservative majorities in Newbury and Christchurch and have risen to 23 or 24 per cent in the latest opinion polls.

"It's all happened rather quietly," said Tony Speller, who lost his North Devon seat to the Liberal Democrats in the last election. "The Liberal Democrats were fairly weird, one or two of them. Now it's a professional organisation."

Mr. Ashdown's task is to consolidate this powerful base so that, instead of crumbling away at the next general election due by 1997, the Liberal Democrats might hold the balance of power.



MENCHU GETS DOCTORATE: Rigoberta Menchu, the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and the United Nations goodwill ambassador for 1993, receives an honorary doctorate degree by the president of Meiji-Gakuin University Sunday. Ms. Menchu is on a seven-day goodwill tour of Japan (AFP photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

IPU condemns ethnic cleansing

CANBERRA (AFP) — The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference has condemned so-called ethnic cleansing in war-ravaged Bosnia-Herzegovina, calling for more countries to ratify international conventions against the expulsion and displacement of war victims. The conference, attended by 415 delegates from more than 100 countries, wound up late Saturday with a strongly worded resolution calling on governments to take "forceful and decisive steps" towards achieving peace in that and other areas of conflict. It also urged all governments to "grant refuge to victims of expulsion and displacement" and, for countries which have not done so, to ratify all conventions dealing with expulsion and displacement. The resolution, carried unanimously, drew attention to the 1949 Geneva Conventions on the Laws of War and their 1977 additional protocols.

New Miss America crowned

ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey (R) — An African-American university student was named the 1994 Miss America Saturday in a pageant tailored for modern times. Kimberly Clarice Aiken, 18, a freshman at the University of South Carolina, said she never felt sure of her victory. "I had doubts about even getting here," she said. The pageant was tightened up for television and featured less of the traditional Hollywood glitz. But it retained its link to its origins, the swimsuit contest. Pageant viewers voted 60-40 in a telephone poll to keep it. It was the 73rd annual pageant, which began at this seaside resort to encourage tourism after the summer ended. Aiken, Miss South Carolina, sang "summertime" in the talent contest and made the homeless her special cause for the year of her reign.

Libarian government blamed for massacre

NEW YORK (AP) — A United Nations investigation has blamed Liberian government troops for a June massacre of more than 400 refugees. Many survivors of the massacre in Harbel, 40 miles (64 kilometres) from Monrovia, the Liberian capital, initially blamed guerrillas loyal to rebel leader Charles Taylor, who denied any role in the incident. But some began suspecting government troops after it was learned that two government soldiers escaped the killings unharmed. According to a copy of the investigation's findings obtained Saturday by the Associated Press, the massacre "was planned and executed by units of the Armed Forces of Liberia." The report has not yet been made public. The Sept. 10 report said that Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front, the rebel United Liberation Movement for Liberia, and the six-nation West African force backing interim President Amos Sawyer's government had no direct role in the massacre.

Thai minister defends ties with Burma

BANGKOK (AP) — Returning from a conference with the Burmese military junta, Foreign Minister Prasong Soonsiri has rejected criticism of Thailand's policy of "constructive engagement" toward Burma. "I doubt whether (critics) have ever done anything to resolve problems we have with Burma," Mr. Prasong was quoted by Bangkok newspapers Sunday as saying after he came home Saturday from a three-day trip to Rangoon. Unlike other prominent figures who have gone to Burma recently, Mr. Prasong did not call for the release of pro-democracy leader and Nobel Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi. He described her house arrest as "a domestic matter." And he said the junta was in the process of drafting "a democratic constitution and introducing a market-oriented economy." Foreign human rights groups and some Thai organisations say Thailand is reluctant to press Burma on human rights because it wants to exploit Burmese natural resources.

Cambodian MPs agree on two-thirds majority

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodia's legislature, debating a new democratic constitution after decades of bloody power struggles, has agreed that laws should only be passed with a two-thirds majority, joint President Prince Norodom Ranariddh said Sunday.

"In Cambodia the situation is very special. After 23 years of war we need more stability — the reason why we are favouring the two-thirds majority system," he told reporters on the assembly's fifth day of debate.

After waging war for 13 years against the Vietnam-installed government of Mr. Hun Sen, Prince Ranariddh's Royalist Party narrowly beat Mr. Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) in elections organised by United Nations peacekeepers in May.

Since then, Prince Ranariddh has forged a interim power-sharing government in which Mr. Hun Sen is co-president.

Asked for his response to the two-thirds majority decision, the ex-Communist Hun Sen told reporters he did not fully understand the majority rule debate but the argument was "normal for democracy."

Prince Ranariddh said Saturday the make-up of the new government, expected to be announced next week, would be little changed from the interim administration.

Negotiations on the sensitive issue of power-sharing with the CPP had been trouble-fire, he said.

Prince Ranariddh said the former ruling party had accepted an end to the current set-up where the two co-presidents share power equally. Under the new formula, there would be a first prime minister and a second one with lesser powers.

Head of State Prince Norodom Sihanouk will return to Phnom Penh from Peking next Thursday and is expected Friday to sign the new constitution, which restores the monarchy. He will be king.

Meanwhile, while the Khmer Rouge's leaders refuse to end more than a decade of war in Cambodia, about 1,700 of its fighters have taken matters into their own hands, defecting in hopes of ending the bloodshed.

The decision was taken here Saturday by the three parties to plan for elections in November-December which will pick new governments in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

"The development will give a new direction to the process of political polarisation," Janata Dal spokesman Hari Kishore Singh said here.

U.N. Assembly session seeks change of direction

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The General Assembly's annual session opening Tuesday finds the United Nations in a state of flux and is likely to scrap or revise a number of time-worn resolutions concerning South Africa and Israel.

The world body's membership has swelled to 184, after the admission during the past year of Andorra, Monaco, Eritrea and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the splitting of Czechoslovakia into two separate countries.

The U.N. has some 80,000 troops manning 14 peacekeeping operations around the world, and unresolved crises in Bosnia and Somalia are certain to figure prominently in speeches.

But the organisation, \$1.9 billion in arrears for regular budget dues and peacekeeping, is so strapped for cash that staff salaries next month may well be delayed. Of this amount, the United States owes \$800 million and Russia owes \$500 million.

The highlight of the session is a three-week-long general debate, which brings scores of government leaders and foreign ministers to New York.

The debate opens on Sept. 27, with U.S. President Bill Clinton, Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and the presidents of Colombia, El Salvador, Mozambique and Albania due to appear.

3 Indian parties to merge

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Three Indian centrist political parties have decided to cast aside their differences and merge ahead of key elections in four states, their spokesmen said Sunday.

The Janata Dal (People's Party), the third largest group in parliament, and its two splinter factions led by Chandra Shekhar and Ajit Singh, both MPs, will come together by Oct. 11, their leaders said.

The new party also to be known as the Janata Dal.

The decision was taken here Saturday by the three parties to plan for elections in November-December which will pick new governments in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

"The development will give a new direction to the process of political polarisation," Janata Dal spokesman Hari Kishore Singh said here.

"It will give thrust to the birth of a third force in Indian politics," he said.

The Janata Dal, formed in 1989, was the dominant constituent of the National Front Alliance which ruled India for 11 months until November 1990.

It split in 1990 when Chandra Shekhar, a former prime minister, broke away with his supporters. Ajit Singh, a farmers' leader, caused the second split in 1991.

Hari Kishore Singh told AFP that leaders of the three parties had realised their folly.

"People have learnt from the mistakes of the past," he said. "We shall remain united."

Ajit Singh added: "Our (party) workers are telling us to forget the past and get together again."

The unified Janata Dal is expected to pose a strong challenge to Premier P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) Party and the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party.

Following Israel's recent signing of accords with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Jordan, the United States and others are working to shelve or tone down some of the many annual resolutions condemning Israeli policies.

In another break with the past, a group of Central American countries is calling for the Assembly to set up a committee to examine the thorny issue of readmitting Taiwan.

In 1971 the Assembly gave Taiwan's U.N. seat to Peking, which is vehemently opposed to separate membership for the island. Peking will use its diplomatic muscle to try to prevent the issue even being inscribed on the Assembly's agenda.

Of growing interest to U.N. members are moves to increase the size of the 15-nation Security Council. It was last enlarged, from 11 members to 15, in 1965, when the United Nations still had fewer than 120 members.

Many argue that the Council, whose importance has soared

with the growth of U.N. peacekeeping operations, should be opened to a wider spectrum of U.N. members and that permanent membership should not be restricted to the five main victors of World War II — the United States, Russia (formerly the Soviet Union), China, Britain and France.

There is no consensus yet on how far the council might be expanded without making it too unwieldy, whether any new permanent seats should be created, and whether they should carry veto power, like the current permanent five.

Decisions on these issues are expected by the time the United Nations celebrates its 50th anniversary, in 1995.

The Assembly president this year will be Guyana's permanent U.N. representative, Samuel R. Insanally, 57.

The post rotates annually among the assembly's five regional groups and he was the unanimous choice of the Latin and Caribbean countries.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mansell to race Indycars for 2 more years

NAZARETH, Pennsylvania (AFP) — Nigel Mansell, on the brink of becoming the first Indycar rookie to win the championship, will compete in the U.S. racing series for at least two more years. Mansell and the Newman-Haas racing team announced the decision Saturday at Nazareth speedway, where Mansell can clinch the title in Sunday's Bosch Spark Plug Grand Prix. The reigning Formula One World champion is expected to earn at least \$10 million plus bonuses for the first two years. Carl Haas, co-owner of the team with actor Paul Newman, said the deal is "a long-term contract, extending through at least the 1995 Indy car season."

Everton win pulsating derby

LONDON (R) — Midfielder Mark Ward and striker Tony Cottee scored as Everton beat city rivals Liverpool 2-0 in an action-packed derby to climb up the English Premier League table Saturday. Everton, cast as relegation candidates at the start of the season, are now fourth, only goal difference separating them from third-placed Aston Villa, won 2-1 at Ipswich with Dean Saunders ending a worrying goal drought. Both are on 15 points, one behind champions Manchester United and Arsenal. Blackburn Rovers, who started the day on 14 points and could have overhauled the leaders with a victory, crashed to a shock 2-0 defeat at home to lowly West Ham, veteran striker Lee Chapman scoring on his debut for his new club. England striker Teddy Sheringham scored twice in two minutes as Tottenham Hotspur thrashed Oldham Athletic 3-0 after going 3-0 up in the opening seven minutes.

Karpov maintains lead in FIDE final

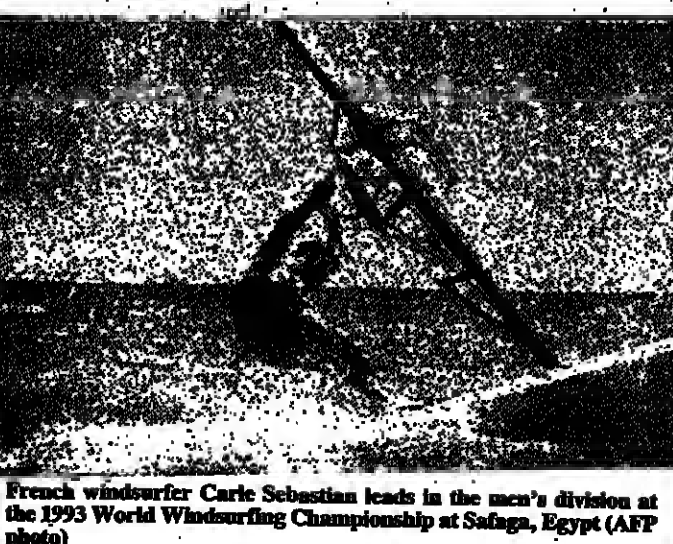
AMSTERDAM (AFP) — Russian grandmaster Anatoly Karpov and Dutchman Jan Timman agreed a draw after 28 moves in the eighth game of their FIDE World Chess Championship match Saturday. Karpov, who played white, leads 4.5-3.5 in the 24-game series. He was world champion from 1975 to 1985. The FIDE (world chess federation) championship final is running concurrently with a rival final organised by the breakaway Professional Chess Association in London between the reigning champion, Garry Kasparov and challenger Nigel Short.

Turkish Olympic champion banned 4 years

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Olympic wrestling champion Mehmet Akif Pirim of Turkey was banned four years Saturday after testing positive for a performance-enhancing drug earlier this year, the International Wrestling Federation said. Fila said the test, carried out after Pirim won the European Championship in Istanbul last spring, had traces of an anabolic steroid named nandrolone. Pirim also won the 62 kilogramme class in the Barcelona Olympics last year. Pirim has denied the accusations.

Real brought down to earth by Deportivo

MADRID (AFP) — Real Madrid were brought firmly down to earth when they crashed to a humiliating 4-0 defeat in their latest Spanish First Division League clash at Deportivo La Coruna Saturday. Still snarling from a 1-3 home loss against Real Valladolid last week, Real matched the home side for only half-an-hour. After that they went to pieces. Real's latest performance raises a big questionmark over the future of manager Benito Floro who is already being tipped to make an early season departure. Deportivo's performance was particularly impressive considering they were without both of their Brazilian internationals — Mauro Silva and Bebeto.



French windsurfer Carl Sebastian leads in the men's division at the 1993 World Windsurfing Championship at Safage, Egypt (AFP photo)

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH
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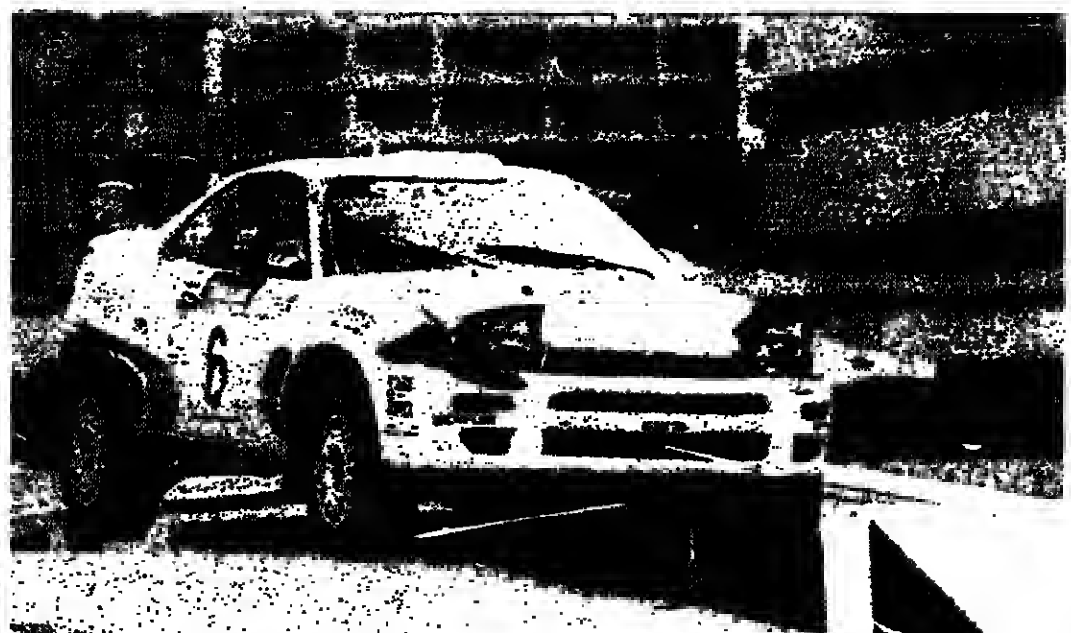
Neither vulnerable. South deals.
NORTH
♠ K J 10
♥ J 5 2
♦ Q J 3
♣ A 5 4 2
EAST
♠ 6 5 2
♥ 10 8 6 7 3
♦ 10 7 5
♣ 6 4 2
WEST
♠ A Q 3
♥ A K Q
♦ A K 9
♣ Q J 10 8

The bidding: South West North East
3 NT Pass 7 NT Pass
Pass Pass
Opening lead: Ten of ♣
Don't commit yourself to a line, no matter how obvious, until you have learned all you can about the distribution. This seemingly obvious piece of advice was ignored by most declarers on this hand from a duplicate event.
The auction shown was not uncommon. South's opening bid enticed a balanced 25-27 points and North went all the way. However, with a flat hand and no intermediates, North should have reined in

his exuberance and simply invited the grand slam by bidding five no trump, in which case South would have settled for 12 tricks—a grand slam was an anti-percentage proposition.

Declarer won the opening lead in hand and, since it seemed there was no way home without the club finesse, he finessed right away. The queen fetched the king from West and declarer was ready to claim—until West shifted a heart on the second club. The limit of the hand now was 12 tricks.

Suppose South delayed playing clubs until all the remaining winners were cashed. When East shows out on the second heart and West follows to three rounds of spades and diamonds, 12 of West's cards are known—three spades, six hearts and three diamonds. Since West cannot have more than one club, declarer must hope that it is the bare king. Therefore, declarer should lead the three of clubs from hand and, when the king appears, 13 tricks roll in. True, that risks going down an extra trick or two if West singleton isn't the king, but that's a small price to pay to land a grand!



Three-time world champion Finn Juha Kankkunen takes a jump during the Australian Rally (AFP photo)

Kankkunen leads Australian Rally

PERTH (AFP) — Finland's Juha Kankkunen, bidding for an unprecedented fourth World Drivers' title, fought off Scott Colin McRae to preserve his lead at the halfway stage of the Australian Rally Sunday.

Kankkunen, a three-time winner of this event and driving a Toyota Celica, increased his overnight lead by just two seconds to lead Subaru's McRae by one minute 19 seconds after 17 stages of the 34-stage four-day race.

The Finn was under siege by McRae throughout Sunday's stages, but he responded to the challenge in the third last leg of the World Rally Championship.

Compatriot Ari Vatanen, in a Subaru Legacy, was third, three minutes 31 seconds off the pace, with leading Ford Escort driver, Francois Delecour of France fourth fastest four minutes 34 seconds down on Kankkunen.

Delecour's Ford teammate and two-time world champion Miki Biasion of Italy was fifth five minutes and four seconds adrift of the leader.

The field has now completed 233km of the 560km of special stages through treacherous gravel roads meandering through forests

with trees lining the rally's course a constant threat to the drivers hurtling around at breakneck speeds.

Vatanen and McRae, the two leading drivers for the 555 Subaru Rally Team, dedicated their spirited performances to teammate Roger Freeth.

The New Zealander was killed Saturday following an accident on the third special stage. Freeth's driver, Possum Bourne, was kept in hospital overnight for observation but was released Sunday.

McRae, who won his and Subaru's first Rally Championship in New Zealand last month, was the only rival capable of catching Kankkunen Sunday.

The 25-year-old recorded the fastest time on three of the opening four special stages.

McRae cut the deficit to just over a minute before Kankkunen halted the slide.

A victory by Kankkunen would give Toyota its inaugural World manufacturer's title — the first time it will have won by a Japanese maker. Toyota leads closest pursuer Ford by 20 points.

Lancia, currently lying fourth on the manufacturer's standings behind Toyota, has won the past six manufacturer titles.

Meanwhile, Subaru drivers Rob Herring and Rod Horsley have withdrawn from the Australian Rally following the death of their team mate Freeth.

A Subaru spokesman said the team were greatly saddened by the 39-year-old New Zealander's death. He said Herring and Horsley would withdraw but Vatanen and McRae would remain in the race.

The hospital's chief of emergency department Dr. Robert Graydon, who supervised Freeth's treatment, confirmed he had died of internal injuries.

"The patient had major chest injuries," Dr. Graydon said. Rally Australia Clerk of Course Garry Connelly said there was still some doubt about how Freeth suffered his fatal injuries.

"An extensive examination of the crashed vehicle was conducted and Mr. Cadringher has stated that it appeared that the integral structure of the roll-over on the vehicle was intact," Connelly said.

"The seat and seat mountings remained in place."

1996 Atlanta Olympics
Women's soccer, beach volleyball and mountain bikes approved

MONTE CARLO (AP) — Beach volleyball, women's soccer and mountain biking were added Saturday to the programme for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

Olympic officials also gave Atlanta organisers approval to hold the opening ceremony the night before the start of the competition rather than on the same day.

The decisions were reached by the International Olympic Committee executive board, which is meeting in Monaco in advance of next Thursday's vote on the host city for the 2000 Olympics.

IOC Sports Director Gilbert Felli said women's soccer had been approved as a permanent Olympic event, with eight teams competing in Atlanta. The United States won the inaugural women's World Cup in 1991 in China.

Beach volleyball was approved on a provisional basis for the 1996 games only. The competition will

be held in Savannah with 24 men's Pairs and 14 women's Pairs.

Women's soccer and beach volleyball had been widely expected to be approved here, but the addition of mountain biking came as a surprise. Felli said 40 men and 40 women would compete in cross-country races in the Conyers area.

"It's an upcoming sport and it's very strong in the United States," Felli said.

Several changes were made in the cycling events. The men's 1050-kilometre team time trial event was scrapped, while the IOC added individual road time trial races for men and women and a women's points track event.

Women's triple jump was added to the programme in track and field.

Taking into account the additional events, Felli said the IOC remained confident of keeping to within the limit of 10,000 athletes for Atlanta.

Bob Brennan, a spokesman for the Atlanta Organizing Committee, said a record 10,000 athletes were expected to compete in 1996. There were 3,000 women athletes at the Games in Barcelona.

The executive board approved moving the opening ceremony from Saturday, July 24, to the evening of Friday, July 23, to sports competition from Saturday and Sunday.

The change will give Atlanta an extra night of prime-time television programming. NBC has acquired the TV rights for \$100 million.

Felli said the move would make it easier to fit all the events into the 16-day programme, allow for flexibility in case of rain or other weather problems and cut out 12 sports will start competition Saturday.

Felli said the change would make it possible to use the same venue for several sports, including wrestling and tennis.

Bertrando captures Woodward

NEW YORK (AP) — Bertrando slotted to victory in the Woodward at Belmont Park on a "super Saturday" that put an end to the American Championship Racing Series and a young winning streak by a horse named for a basketball player.

Bertrando put on the speed on a sloppy, rainy day in winning the Woodward by 1 1/2 lengths over Devil His Due, whose second-place finish was good enough to win the \$550,000 bonus in the last year of the financially troubled ACRS.

"I don't know how I'll pay my bills next year without the ACRS," said Bertrando's trainer Bobby Frankel, who picked up a \$225,000 bonus for second in the standings.

The \$500,000 Woodward, the ninth and final race of this year's ACRS, was one of four Grade I stakes on a Belmont programme that also included the Futurity for 2-year-old colts, the Marton for 2-year-old fillies and the Man O' War on turf.

In the Futurity, Holy Bull, which paid \$8.20 for a \$2 bet to win, ridden by Mike Smith, handed Dehere his first loss.



French Open champion Sergi Bruguera

Bruguera reaches 8th final

BORDEAUX (AFP) — Spaniard Sergi Bruguera marched into his eighth final of the season with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 defeat of France's Arnaud Boesich in the \$55,000 dollar ATP Tournament Saturday.

Although the crowd cheered him on, Boesich could not unsettle the French Open champion, who meets surprise finalist Diego Nargiso of Italy in the final.

A break in the ninth game brought Boesich the first set at 6-4, but world number four Bruguera got stronger mentally and physically to oust the third-ranked Frenchman.

Qualifier Nargiso, world ranked just 137, played giantkiller to exit second seed and Olympic

champion Marc Rosset of Switzerland 6-3, 6-4.

A break in the ninth game brought Boesich the first set at 6-4, but world number four Bruguera got stronger mentally and physically to oust the third-ranked Frenchman.

Ivanisevic, Cherkasov to play in Romanian Open's final

In Bucharest, Romania, seeded Goran Ivanisevic defeated Argentine's Guillermo Paez 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 and Andrei Cherkasov overpowered Romania's Andrei Gaudenzi 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 in semifinals action in the \$55,000 Romanian Open clay court tournament.

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	CONCORD 1 PASSENGER 57 CONCORD 2 LAST ACTION HERO		Adel Imam in Wad Sayyed Al Shaghal play (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30		Robert Redford Demi Moore — in INDECENT PROPOSAL A special show for children at 11 a.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays Problem Child 2 Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		presents a film entitled: Al Iim Nuron A popular political comedy Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalajel, Hassan Al Shaar, Fuad Shomali In addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day		Returns to you Thursday Aug. 26 in the play: Arab Summit Conference	
	SHOWS: 12:30, 3:15, 6, 8:15, 10:15									

World Bank sees growth potential in Mideast region

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Middle East countries have the potential for impressive economic growth, but unemployment remains a major drawback, the World Bank said in its annual report on the region.

A large pool of skilled, relatively inexpensive manpower, a dynamic entrepreneurial trading class and the proximity of the huge European market are all factors in favour of the eight countries covered by the report.

They are Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen.

But the main problem faced by these countries, the report said, was unemployment which is running between 15 per cent and 25 per cent.

The situation was aggravated by the fact that population growth was outpacing economic growth.

The bank report said their economies would have to grow at five per cent a year to compensate for an annual 2.5 per cent growth in population. Iran, Jordan and Yemen had the toughest job ahead of them.

It was essential to stimulate private sectors in the region, while improvements were needed in the public domain and in the management of foreign debt, the report said.

Tunisia and Morocco had already made significant progress at reforming their economic systems while Egypt and Jordan were just beginning.

Iran and Lebanon are both undergoing periods of reconstruction after regional wars, while Algeria and Yemen need to enact basic reforms in the face of difficult domestic problems.

The bank recommends expansion and improvements in basic services such as health care, education and water supplies, rationalisation of an already extensive system of higher-level services and the creation of employment opportunities especially for youths.

The bank said that the region was facing "some unique environmental challenges": namely, the worsening urban environment, the scarcity and degradation of water resources, the degradation of land and forest resources and the neglect of regional commons.

The recent accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation which will lead to some \$3 billion dollars in international aid being injected into the region over a 10-year period will be a significant boom.

In the fiscal year up to June, the bank loaned \$1.8 billion to countries in the region, a 27 per cent increase on the previous year.

PLO to ask World Bank to increase aid

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) will ask a World Bank meeting in Washington to increase a \$3 billion economic development plan to rehabilitate the West Bank and Gaza Strip, officials said.

"It's too small a figure for the whole 10 years ... we believe the Palestinian authority will need investments of not less than \$2 billion annually in the first two years to rebuild the economy," said Samir Abdullah, head of the Palestinian team which helped compile the World Bank proposal.

"The PLO will ask the World Bank to change the assumptions if based its investment proposal on ... in the light of the new Israel-PLO accord," he told Reuters on Saturday before leaving for the Sept. 20 meeting in Washington.

The PLO's economic experts will ask the bank to double at least its 10-year investment because it does not include housing for an expected influx of returning refugees and new projects envisioned in the PLO-Israel accord.

The bank's proposed \$3 billion in public investment excludes housing but it said the territories would need an extra \$2.5 billion in private sector investment during that time to make their economy viable.

Israel, Arab states and the PLO will meet at the World Bank-sponsored meeting to discuss the plan, which is expected to be the core of a drive to rebuild the shattered economy of the occupied territories following a PLO-Israeli peace agreement signed Monday.

Mr. Abdullah said the World Bank study had not factored in an expected population increase in the Israel-held territories where refugees are allowed to return home and housing costs.

"The World Bank's investment plan did not take into account the return of an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 displaced Palestinians nor housing sector needs," Mr. Abdullah said.

The PLO says that believes Israel will allow that number of refugees from the 1967 war during an interim period of self-rule.

Mr. Abdullah said the plan would also be asked to include a Gaza port complex estimated at between \$300 million to \$500 million and upgrading of two airports envisioned in the PLO-Israel accord.

The PLO's "Palestinian development programme 1994-2000," the PLO's economic blueprint, allocates \$5.79 billion in construction and housing for an estimated 500,000 refugees it expected to return within the plan's seven-year period.

It estimates \$3.75 billion will be needed to cover public housing and the rest for public construction, a major component of the new economy.

Mr. Abdullah said he also believes the World Bank must shift some of the projects now left to the second stage of its plan to the first stage because the PLO-Israeli deal gives the Palestinians full authority in Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho.

He said the PLO would ask the World Bank to help set up the "Palestinian development bank" mentioned in the Palestinian-Israeli accord and whose structure was currently being planned.

"The World Bank will be called on to recommend technical aid and mobilising funds to facilitate setting up the bank which is the channel and instrument for directing foreign aid and local development financing," Mr. Abdullah said.

The PLO's economic experts will tell the World Bank that the role they assigned to the private sector was beyond its capacity in the initial stage of reconstruction.

"The private sector will have a central role ... but initially the public sector must play its role in creating the right investment climate," Mr. Abdullah said.

that struck the hospital grounds could have been militia-fired ones that went away.

Maj. Stockwell also accused the militia of fugitive warlord Mohammed Farrah Aideded was firing from near the hospital to prevent U.N. troops from retaliating against the sensitive area.

"The problem here is that the Aideded militia continues to engage us from areas ... that are sanctuaries," he said. "He (Aideded) is endangering the lives of civilians."

But Maj. Stockwell said U.N. troops would continue to respond to fire from militiamen.

"We're not just going to take it because something is fired from the vicinity of a hospital," he said.

About 26,000 soldiers from 28 countries are in Somalia to help the country recover from its famine and civil war-fare, but they have become embroiled in a battle with Gen. Aideded

discussing this with their lawyer," Mr. Getting said.

Mr. Tahboub said the couple have one month to file an appeal — this time with the central appeals court in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Sharjah is one of seven emirates in the UAE federation.

The court reduced Peter and Yvonne Wade's sentence to three months and then commuted it to deportation, the couple's lawyer said. There were indications the Wades might appeal again in an effort to stay in Sharjah.

The Wades, who were jailed briefly in August after a lower court convicted them of adultery, emerged smiling from the closed court session.

"I am very happy the court decided only to order our deportation," said Peter Wade, a 41-year-old helicopter pilot.

Yvonne, 28, said she would appeal the deportation order. But the Wades' lawyer, Hafez Tahboub, told reporters it was premature to speculate about further appeals.

British Vice Consul David Getting, who was with the couple at the court, said no date was set for the deportation. He, too, indicated they may be considering an appeal of the deportation order.

"As far as I know they are



AMMAN SERVICES: His Majesty King Hussein Sunday confers with Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi (left) during a visit he paid to the offices of the Greater Amman Municipal Council. During the meeting, attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali (second from right) and Royal Court Chief Khalid Al Karaki, the King "made some observations on the municipality's role at this stage and how to turn Amman into a modern city with integrated services," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. The agency said the King also paid a visit to the Armed Forces Headquarters and held talks with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Lieutenant-General Abdul Hafez Al Mira' (Petra photo)

King backs ban on officials writing in newspapers without permission

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday backed a government order to ban public employees from writing in local newspapers without prior approval, saying the decision was made necessary by the fact that certain officials had abused their privilege to write.

The King said he regretted that the behaviour of "one or more" writers had led to this situation. "But I do not see any reason why they (the officials who write) should not apply for permission (and obtain it)," the King said.

The King was replying to a question by one of the writers who was affected by the decision, Mu'nis Razzaz, during a meeting with the press, on whether the government's ban did not obstruct Jordan's democratic goals.

The King did not mention the "one writer or more" by name, but journalists present at the meeting thought he was referring to a senior official at the Prime Ministry, Khaled Mahadeen, who wrote an article last week (heavily) criticising a government minister, and who is known to have clashed with other senior officials, including the prime minister himself.

In an opinion piece which he contributed to the weekly tabloid Shihab, Mr. Mahadeen had attacked the health minister over an article the latter wrote in Al Rai newspaper in which he called on Jordanians to think logically before taking action. The minister's comment came in response to another article criticising him for arriving late to a press conference for Jordanian journalists.

"I only defended the Jordanian people in that article," Mr. Mahadeen said. "If this decision (banning employees from writing) is directed at me I would personally resign. But I don't understand how someone like me who had until recently served as director of the Jordan News Agency, Petra, and is advisor to the prime minister can be considered as dangerous man who should not write."

The government's decision early last week was described by Islamists, political parties and writers as undemocratic and an infringement on freedom of expression. Critics of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali's decision condemned the move as intended

to curb those writers who had criticised the policies of the Majali government.

Dr. Majali's order, published last Tuesday, bans all government employees from writing in the local newspapers under their names or under pseudonyms. The statement said "that many government employees are writing in the newspapers without obtaining permission from the Cabinet as stipulated in the civil service code."

Writers contacted by the Jordan Times said they would submit applications to obtain permission. "If applications were rejected, we'll start moving," one of them said.

"The prime minister's statement is based on an article in the civil service regulations that is in contradiction not only with the Constitution but also with all laws and regulations that guarantee the freedom of expression," Mr. Mahadeen said. "What is needed now is the cancellation of that article."

Another prominent writer, Muna Shuqair, a columnist at Al Dostour and a senior official at the Ministry of Higher Education, also believed the prime minister's statement was directed at her. She said she was greatly dismayed by the move, "which reflects the government's intolerance and its unwillingness to accept criticism."

Ms. Shuqair pointed out that if the article which bans government employees from holding another job without obtaining the Cabinet's approval was to be implemented, it would mean that tens of thousands of employees would be affected.

"The newspapers themselves should adopt a unified stand against this move which is an infringement on the right of expression," she said.

President of the Jordan Press Association (JPA) Suleiman Qudus supported some writers' argument that the civil service regulations should be reviewed but said that in this case the association would give priority to defending JPA members.

"Civil service regulations were issued in the era preceding that of political change and introduction of democracy which is the basis of the contradiction that exists between some articles and Political Parties Law," Mr. Qudus said. "But what is essential for the

association is that this article not be implemented against its members," he pointed out.

The General Union of Arab Writers issued a statement Thursday asking the prime minister to reverse his decision. The Jordanian Arab National Democratic Alliance (JANDA), which groups seven parties, also held a meeting Wednesday evening and drafted a statement criticising the move. The draft was not released since the King's meeting with the press Saturday took place at the same time that JANDA wanted to release it.

The JANDA draft, according to the JADP secretary general, Mr. Razzaz, criticises Dr. Majali's statement and calls for drawing up a unified programme policy against this measure. The draft is signed by poets, journalists and writers.

"The press was the last institution to reap the fruits of the democratic change," Mr. Razzaz said. "What are they afraid of? The press is following the line of the government to a large extent."

In a statement issued at a press conference Wednesday, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) criticised the move by saying: "Apparently the government tended to forget that the Political Parties Law has given government employees the right to join political parties which consequently gives them the right to write in newspapers and exercise their constitutional right in expressing their views and opinions... if any contradiction arises between an old and new law, the reference is to the new one," the statement said.

"We demand from the government to reverse its decision and open channels for freedom of expression in all media means."

Mr. Mahadeen last week applied for permission to resume writing under his name, but the Council of Ministers in its weekly meeting on Saturday unanimously rejected his request.

He is understood to have met with the prime minister on Saturday afternoon, and briefly discussed the issue with him.

The meeting ended on a cordial note, according to well-informed sources, but it was not immediately clear with the rejection of his application by the Council of Ministers came before the meeting or after it.

Shots fired at Egyptian tourist boat

ASSYUT (Agencies) — Suspected Muslim fundamentalists fired shots at a pleasure boat taking 22 French tourists on a cruise of the Nile but no one was injured, police said Sunday.

The vessel, the Patros, came under fire Saturday near the town of Abu Tig, police said.

No one was hit and no damage was reported and the boat continued on its way towards Aswan, some 900 kilometres south of Cairo, police said.

The attack was the 11th against foreign tourists in Assiut province since October of last year, according to an AFP toll compiled from police reports.

A British tourist was killed in one of the attacks.

Also Saturday, an Egyptian civil servant was shot dead in the Assiut region in another attack by suspected Muslim fundamentalists.

He was the 73rd civilian killed since fundamentalist unrest erupted in Egypt in March 1992. A police general was also shot dead in Aswan Saturday by suspected fundamentalists.

Vatican, Israel close to relations

VATICAN CITY, (R) — Vatican and Israeli negotiators have reached an agreement that will lead to diplomatic ties soon and clear the way to a papal visit to the Jewish state, diplomatic sources said on Sunday.

"It's purely a matter of timing over the announcement of the signing the fundamental agreement," said one source who has been closely following the 14-month-old negotiations.

The agreement was reached during the commission's latest meeting in occupied Jerusalem last week. It was made possible by last Monday's peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Vatican recognition of Israel would be a landmark towards improving relations between Catholics and Jews around the world after 2,000 years of friction.

After more than four decades of often chilly relations, the Holy See and the Jewish state took the first step towards recognition in July 1992 by setting up the commission.

"As far as the members of the commission are concerned they have done their work. Each side has come as far as it could to satisfy the other," the source said.

Diplomatic sources said they believed approval of the commission's agreement by the Vatican's secretary of state and the Israeli foreign ministry was a virtually certainty.

"I think the Vatican is now ready. As soon as this document has gone back to the secretariat of state, I think they will feel they have achieved more than they needed to in light of Middle East peace development," one source said.

The fundamental agreement consists of 14 points covering items of mutual interest such as the legal status of the church in Israel or its territories, taxation, religious tourism and a stand against anti-Semitism.

Wider issues such as the Palestinian question and international guarantees for Jerusalem as a city sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims were left to the

Washington talks.

While recognising Israel's right to exist within secure borders, the Vatican — which supports a Palestinian homeland — always held back on full relations with the Jewish state until these issues could be resolved.

"The fundamental agreement, when it is signed, will be accompanied by the announcement of an exchange of diplomatic representatives (because) the issue of diplomatic normalisation was one of the 14 items on the agenda," one source said.

The sources said an announcement on diplomatic ties could come by November or earlier.

One said it could coincide with the 28th anniversary on October 28 of "Nostra Aetate" (in our times), a second Vatican council document that urged dialogue with Jews and repudiated the idea of collective Jewish guilt for Christ's death.

Israeli sources said both sides were close to establishing relations and that the process would be boosted by an unprecedented meeting between Pope John Paul II and Israel's chief rabbi, Yisrael Meir Lau, in Italy on Tuesday.

The meeting will take place at the Pope's summer residence at Castelgandolfo, just outside Rome.

World Jewish leaders have pressed the Vatican for decades to recognise Israel fully, saying this would help dispel the notion held by some Arabs that the Jewish states was not a permanent entity.

The new ties would make it possible for the 73-year-old Pope — who made history when he visited Rome's synagogue in 1986 and humbly called Jews "our beloved older brothers" — to realise his dream to visit the Holy Land.

Last October, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres invited the pontiff to make a visit whenever he wanted.

The last pontiff to make a trip to the Holy Land was Pope Paul VI in 1964 — three years before the war in which Israel seized East Jerusalem and the West Bank, where many of Christianity's holy sites are located.

Bosnian foes fight, snub truce and peace efforts

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Muslims and Croats traded fire Sunday, ignoring a day old truce deadline agreed by their political leaders and diplomatic efforts to end the civil war before the harsh Balkan winter sets in.

The former allies fought around the ancient Ottoman city of Mostar and for control of the north-south highway linking the Croat-held towns of Vitez and Busovaca in central Bosnia, Croatian radio reported.

Reuters correspondent Kurt Schork said Muslims and Croats were exchanging artillery, heavy machinegun and small arms fire on the highway connecting Vitez and Busovaca where the Croat forces have their headquarters.

The Croatian news agency Hina reported a renewed Muslim assault on Croat defence council (HVO) positions in the whole Vitez area and said Muslims were deploying tanks.

But U.N. officers played down the reports and said the level of fighting had subsided.

"In the overall, military action in Bosnia has declined dramatically and it appears the ceasefire agreement is taking hold," U.N. Protection Force spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Bill Aikman told reporters in Sarajevo.

In Zagreb, international peace negotiators pushed ahead on Sunday with their efforts to clinch a Bosnian peace agreement in time for a possible signing in Sarajevo Tuesday.

"They will be working today trying to breach the gap," spokesman John Mills told Reuters from the Croatian port of Split where Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg arrived on Saturday for talks with Croat leaders.

But Bosnia's Muslim president, Alija Izetbegovic, said he doubted if a peace accord was signed at the planned meeting of Muslim, Croat and Serb leaders.

"I personally don't see it (happening) and I told Owen that," Mr. Izetbegovic told Bosnian radio on Saturday.

Lord Owen himself, after meeting Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban, said an agreement was " tantalisingly close " but it was still not certain that the proposed Sarajevo meeting would be held.

The sticking point is a Muslim demand for an additional four per cent of territory to the 30 per cent assigned to them, giving them access to major rivers and the sea. Serbs who would get 52 per cent and Croats 18 per cent refuse to yield an inch.

Court lifts restraining order against Demjanjuk

TAL AVIV (AP) — An Israeli supreme court justice on Sunday lifted a restraining order delaying John Demjanjuk's deportation five times.

Mr. Demjanjuk's attorney Yoram Sheftel said that Sunday's ruling marked an end to the lengthy appeals against Mr. Demjanjuk's release.

"All the motions for further review have been rejected," Mr. Sheftel said, adding that no further appeals were now possible.

Mr. Sheftel said that his client had been informed of the decision in his jail cell at the Ayalon prison but declined to say when the former Ohio autoworker would leave.

In the past, family members have said that Mr. Demjanjuk would go to the United States although as a Ukrainian national he would also be entitled to go that former Soviet republic.

Mr. Sheftel declined to say where Mr. Demjanjuk would go citing security.

He will not disclose this for security reasons," he said. "Unfortunately I think people will find out from the state of Israel which wants to let everybody know."

COLUMN

Ramos daughter to wed movie actor

MANILA (R) — President Fidel Ramos' daughter Josephine is to marry a Filipino film actor and television director next month, the presidential palace announced Sunday. Miss Ramos, a pop singer, and Lloyd Samartino, son of a Canadian businessman and a Filipino show business star, will be married at the Malacanang Presidential Palace. Miss Ramos, the second of the president's five daughters, and Samartino have been friends since childhood.

Jackson barred from touching Wailing Wall

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Michael Jackson was Saturday prevented from touching the Wailing Wall by a makeshift barricade of chairs pushed in his way by Jews engaged in their Sabbath prayers. The American pop star made his way to the wall surrounded by his usual entourage of enormous bodyguards, policemen, photographers and waiting fans, mostly teenagers. A barricade of chairs pushed in his way by Jewish religious faithful, at the wall to celebrate the Sabbath, stopped him from touching the sacred stones. Jackson, who is at the centre of child-molestation allegations in California, helicopter-landed in Jerusalem Saturday after arriving in Israel from Russia Friday. He was due to give two concerts in Tel Aviv Sunday and Tuesday.

James Caan questioned by police in death probe

LOS ANGELES (R) — Police questioned actor James Caan for hours as a witness in an investigation into a possible murder, authorities said. An unidentified man was found dead Saturday morning in the courtyard of an affluent west Los Angeles apartment building. Police said the 54-year-old actor was in the apartment building at the time and may have known the victim. "Mr. Caan has been interviewed as a witness and has been released. The investigation into the death ... is continuing," a statement said. Broadcast news reports gave conflicting reports of the cause of death, with some saying the man fell or was pushed to his death and others saying he was shot in the head. Said police were awaiting the results of an autopsy. Caan was questioned from early morning until he was released at about 6 p.m. He shipped out a side door into a waiting car to avoid camera crews and photographers outside. Police Captain William Gartland said Caan had not been implicated in any crime. "As of this time, he is just a witness in this matter," he told reporters but declined to elaborate. Police said preliminary information showed the victim "may have been associated" with the tenant of an apartment in the building.

Family arrested after heroin found in vehicle

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — A family of four and their driver were arrested Saturday while trying to smuggle 56 kilograms (123 pounds) of heroin across Pakistan, drug agents said. The arrests near the western frontier town were noteworthy because they showed how ordinary citizens have become involved in Pakistan's flourishing drug trade, officials said. The refined heroin, in powder form, would be worth an estimated \$7 million by the time it reached the streets of Europe or the United States, said Ahsan Mukhtar Shah, head of the Narcotics Control Board in Peshawar. After a tip off, drug agents stopped a Toyota land cruiser and found the heroin stuffed inside the cavities of the vehicle, Mr. Shah said. Police detained the driver, who is suspected of being a professional drug courier, and a family of four, including two boys, ages 9 and 4. The head of the family, Zahir Ali, said he was a schoolteacher who had been tempted to transport the drugs to supplement his meager salary, which is the equivalent of \$60 a month. As he spoke, his wife and children cried hysterically. "I will die if you don't release my mother," said one of the boys. Mr. Shah said the family was offered less than \$200 to ride in the vehicle. Drug smugglers are increasingly employing families to accompany drug shipments in hopes that their presence will lessen suspicions, he added.